

THE CHRISTIANS WHO THINK BUSH ISN'T
**THE AMERICAN
PROSPECT**

APRIL 2004

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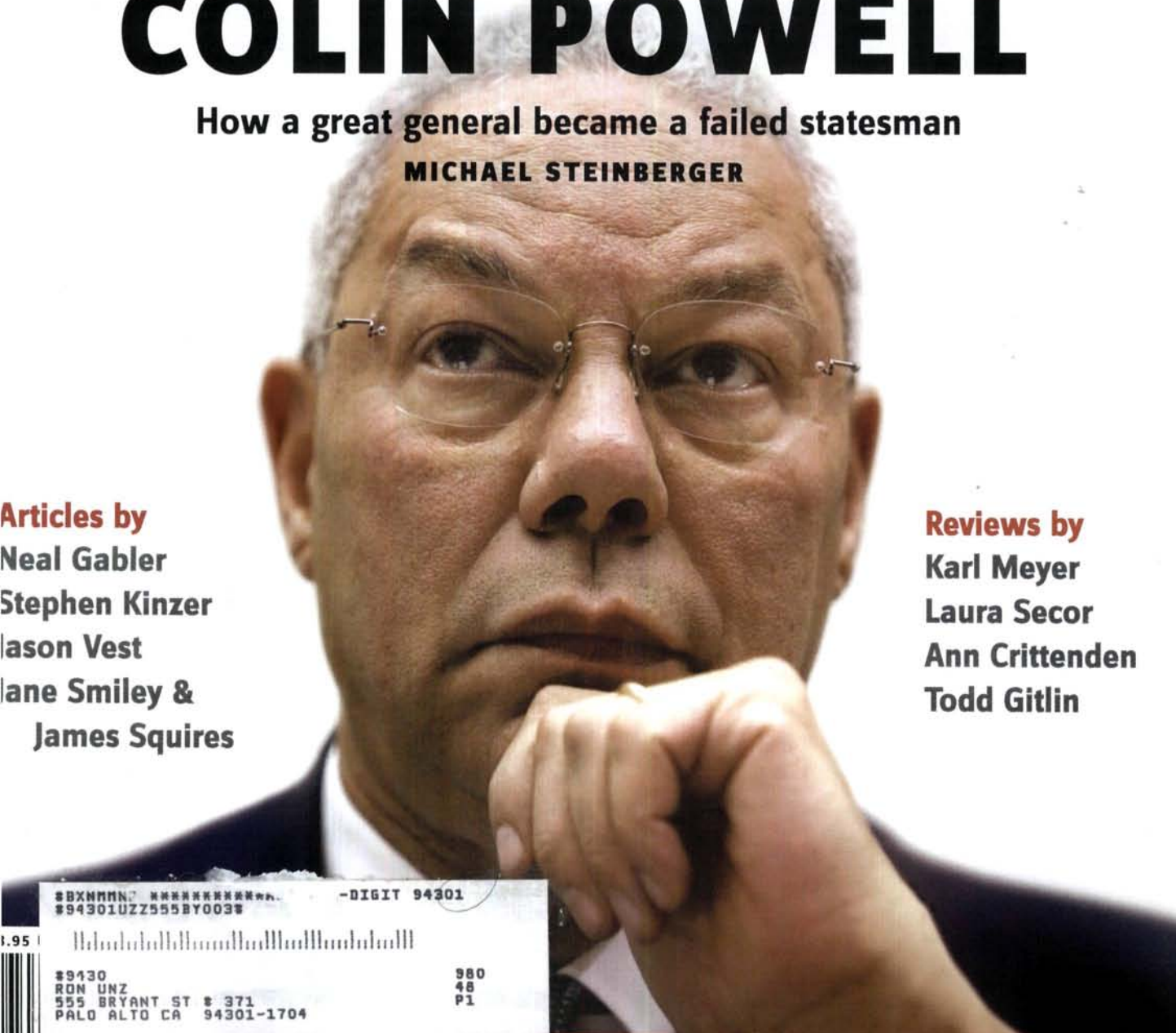
**THE SHAME OF
COLIN POWELL**

How a great general became a failed statesman

MICHAEL STEINBERGER

Articles by
Neal Gabler
Stephen Kinzer
Jason Vest
Jane Smiley &
James Squires

Reviews by
Karl Meyer
Laura Secor
Ann Crittenden
Todd Gitlin



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BUSH: THE PRESIDENT WHO KNEW NOT ISRAEL

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THE AMERICAN PROSPECT



"To Jimmy Carter, right-wing support of Israel is based on 'a completely foolish and erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures.'" PAGE 41

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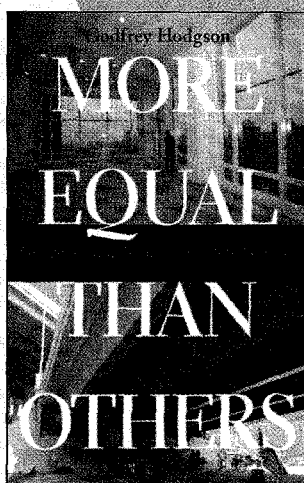
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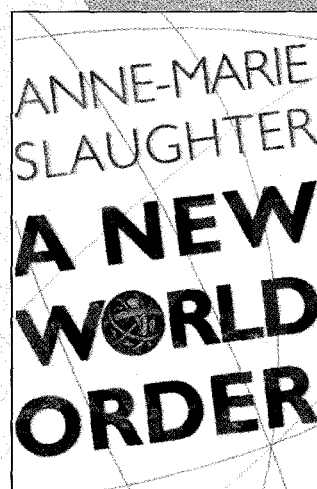
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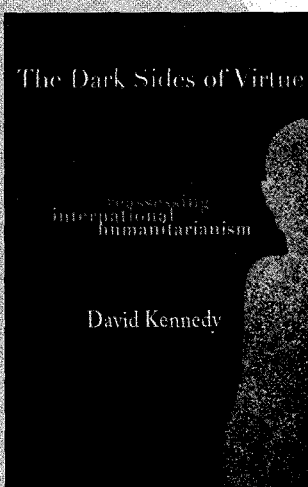
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Good Work

More than two decades ago, the Nobel Prize-winning economist Wassily Leontief imagined a world where productivity was so high that machines would produce all physical goods. There would be just one manufacturing job: the human worker

who flipped the switch. Leontief wondered, what would everyone else do for a living?

His answer was that the immense wealth generated by all that productivity would have to be redistributed so that other people would have useful employment providing services to complement all those physical goods. Otherwise, nobody could afford to buy the products.

Leontief's industrial dystopia has arrived a lot sooner than most economists forecast. There have been "automation" scares before. But in our own era there were adequate mechanisms of redistribution, so that increased productivity eventually produced other jobs at decent wages. As recently as the 1990s, rising productivity ended up producing rising employment and earnings.

Today, however, high productivity is blending with increased outsourcing so that job growth lags far behind gross domestic product growth. As Representative Barney Frank observed in a recent economic address, "We are at a point where the ability of the private sector in this country to create wealth is now outstripping its ability to create jobs." The reason? "A disproportionately large share of the increased wealth in this society is now going to the owners of capital," Frank explained.

Two paths are possible. We can just let the market allocate the fruits of all that productivity by leaving private wealth highly concentrated. The wealthy would then create personal service jobs by hiring legions of chauffeurs, caterers, nannies, housemaids, decorators, butlers, etc. In the retail sector, a few astronomically wealthy entrepreneurs would hire legions of low-wage sales clerks. This would soak up the unemployed, but rather in the manner of Upstairs-Downstairs England.

Alternatively, we could tax some of that private wealth and use social investment to create decent jobs that would serve a much broader range of human needs—jobs in teaching, health care, child development, and other high-quality public services. Relatedly, we could use the power of government regulation and trade unionism to ensure that private service-sector jobs—at hotels, nursing homes, Wal-Marts, fast-food joints, and so on—pay a living wage. To the extent

that postwar America avoided the social fate of late Victorian England, it was because we used government to tax, spend, invest, redistribute, and regulate. Public investment can also keep the economy at full employment, which in turn strengthens the bargaining power of all workers.

The second front is trade policy, which is interacting with technology to accelerate the drain of manufacturing jobs. It does make sense to have poorer countries absorb some jobs once performed by Americans. But today, China and India have such immense capacities to absorb technology and jobs (but not purchasing power) that the pace is un-

bearable. Worse, China (and to a lesser extent India) flouts the trade rules from which it derives benefit. China is anything but a conventional capitalist economy. Credit is subsidized and allocated by the state. Its currency is manipulated. Its workers have no rights. China steals Western intellectual property and negotiates coercive technology transfer terms with U.S. trading partners. Because China is not free, trade with China needs to be managed.

More broadly, we need a strategy for systematically raising the purchasing power of workers in the Third World, just as we need to redistribute it at home. The best place to start is to enforce their right to join unions. The AFL-CIO recently filed an innovative trade complaint, calculating that China's illegal repression of workers' rights translates to an improper 43-percent cost advantage, which in turn has cost America 727,000 jobs.

Finally, social investment needs to help American entrepreneurs create export winners that generate good manufacturing and service jobs for the domestic and global economy. Public investment in energy independence would create millions of good jobs at home. As former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Reed Hundt observes, a policy of providing every home in America with high-quality broadband would create new technology jobs and better position America to compete globally.

Advanced technology, rapid productivity growth, and global commerce can be reconciled with plentiful good jobs. But not if we leave everything to the private market. ■

—ROBERT KUTTNER

**When the private
sector displaces
workers, public
investment must
create good jobs.**



"We could use some media industry self-reflection. ... Where is the caliber of reporting that brought down the Nixon administration?"

—JANET McNAMARA, Lee's Summit, MO

Correspondence

Mind Readers

WOW! DID THEY READ MY mind?

Reading "Wake-Up Time" by Eric Alterman and Michael Tomasky [March 2004] was a dream come true. Ever since the last years of the Clinton presidency, I have felt betrayed by my onetime colleagues. As a former television reporter here in my native Midwest, I have been stunned and outraged by the national media's gullibility and lack of investigation into the current administration's false claims and past associations.

How could you miss the lackluster drivel that has passed as journalism the last five years? But, like the elephant in the living room, many just haven't been able to see it, or maybe have refused to see it.

It has been my belief that these so-called reporters who work for national media megacorporations have been either lazy, told what to report and what not to report, or pushed by the quick sound bite and what Alterman and Tomasky call "the tyranny of an instant news cycle." That's not how I was trained at the Missouri School of Journalism.

We could use some media industry self-reflection. It could be tough, but isn't media autonomy worth the effort? Where is the caliber of reporting that brought down the Nixon administra-

tion? Is anyone even close?

Thanks, Alterman and Tomasky! Now, let's get the word out beyond the confines of *The American Prospect* readership!

JANET McNAMARA
Lee's Summit, MO

Altar-cation

PAUL STARR'S DISCUSSION of gay marriage and political tactics ["Judicial Overreach," March] recognizes the perils of pushing Americans to use the "M-word." There is another farsighted solution that he does not mention.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court has a point that the state lacks a valid basis to discriminate about marriage versus civil unions on the basis of sexual orientation. But Starr rightly observes that feelings about marriage are deeply personal and steeped in tradition. The most sensible solution would grant legal equality by getting the state out of the business of distinguishing which civil unions should be called marriage. The state should recognize the rights and obligations of any two adults to form a civil union. End of story. Let people decide within their own circles whether to call it dating, going steady, or marriage.

There's precedent for this. Motherhood is a category that is arguably even more intimate and tradi-

tional than marriage. In the face of changing norms and reproductive technologies, the state got out of the business of deciding who should have that M-word. We're left scrambling with terms like "birth mother," "biological mother," and "primary caregiver." Sure, the state assigns child custody in a divorce or looks at DNA if babies get switched at a hospital. But not "mother."

In the long term, there would also be political benefit. The Massachusetts court has galvanized the religious right while driving a wedge between progressives who feel uncomfortable and those like myself whose instincts are to see this as a civil-rights issue. Starr is correct that the separate-is-unequal argument is harder to make with gay civil unions than with underfunded black schools. Getting the state out of the business of choosing who can use the M-word would turn the tables by ultimately splitting the libertarian and the Christian right.

Ultimately, it will be the only way to be both legally sound and politically savvy.

PHINEAS BAXANDALL,
PH.D., *John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA*

WHILE READING PAUL Starr's piece about the Massachusetts Supreme

Judicial Court's decision legalizing gay marriage, I had to check the URL several times to make sure that I had in fact logged on to *The American Prospect* Web site and not that of the *National Review*.

Several mainstream national newspapers, including *The Washington Post*, have questioned the validity of the Massachusetts decision and wondered aloud why the court didn't simply authorize civil unions (given the politically explosive implications of the "M-word"), while, at the same time, expressing their own personal support for the idea of gay marriage (I don't think we've seen this much parsing since the Clinton administration). That the *Post* and other mainstream media outlets would try to find the center on this issue and, in the process, take such a nuanced view is unsurprising. (For the record, I disagree with their position and support both the idea of gay marriage and the Massachusetts court's decision.)

It is therefore deeply disappointing that a progressive publication such as the *Prospect* would come out against this decision. In much the same way that conservatives, I believe, should expect their media outlets to oppose the Massachusetts decision, we on the left have a right to expect our own publications to come out in

favor of it. If the *Prospect* cannot be trusted to support the extension of civil rights—even by judicial decision (which is what *Brown v. Board of Education* was, after all)—who can we progressives trust?

ROBERT
Redmond, WA

Air Power

THANK YOU FOR PAUL Starr's article on liberal talk radio ["Reclaiming the Air," March]. I'd like to add that there are currently some very successful progressive voices on the air, including Enid Goldstein on KNRC, Randi Rhodes on WJNO, and Thom Hartmann on www.RadioPower.org. All three have growing national audiences via Internet streaming and are shattering the fragile arguments of America's Humpty Dumpty, Rush Limbaugh.

Democracy begins in conversation. I hope *The American Prospect's* readers will consider joining the air-wave discussion.

PRESTON ENRIGHT
Denver, CO

Hey, Thank You

THIS IS A BIG THANK YOU for producing such an informative magazine. The contents are varied and the writing is good. I always find something worth reading to learn more about my

world, and the special reports are a bonus.

I especially want to commend you for the special report on education ["Children Left Behind"] in the February 2004 issue. The eight selections told me a great deal I did not know about the profession from which I retired. I just wish all critics of public education knew the contents so they would have a better basis on which to make judgments.

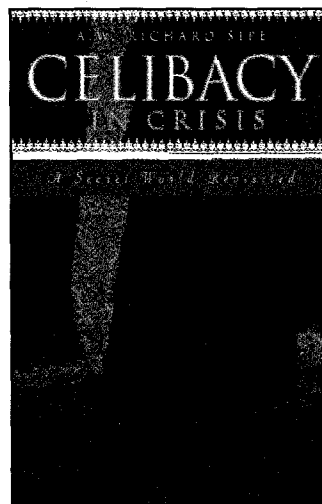
Many thanks.
HUGO BORRESEN
Jacksonville, FL

Correction: In last month's editorial, "Follow the Money," I was far too dismissive of state-level efforts to limit big money in politics. In addition to Maine, grass-roots reformers have succeeded in enacting clean-elections models—in which candidates who limit private donations get public funding—in Arizona, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Vermont (with legislation pending in Connecticut and Hawaii). This model is the only bright light in a dismal scene. Apologies to these heroic activists who are making a difference.

—ROBERT KUTTNER

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NEW FROM BRUNNER-ROUTLEDGE



"A timely and welcome look at the issue of celibacy... Sipe outlines lucidly the theoretical and practical difficulties created by the church's policy."

—THE ECONOMIST

Based on 25 years of confidential, in-depth interviews with over 1500 priests, sexual partners, and victims, A.W. Richard Sipe fearlessly removes the cloak of secrecy surrounding celibacy, and exposes the current tragedy of sexual abuse by priests within the broader

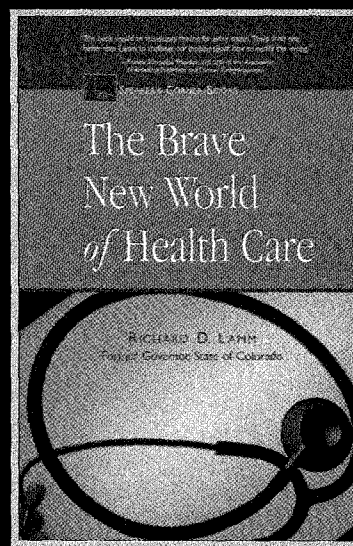
context of the actual practice, process, and achievement of celibacy. *Celibacy in Crisis* goes beyond the recent headlines to present a fascinating exploration into the origins of celibacy in Church history, the latest information on pedophilia by clergy, and realistic guidelines for reformation of the Church's policies on the ancient religious custom.

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BY RICHARD D. LAMM
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The largest purchase the average American family will make in their lifetime is no longer their house, but their health care.



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Devil in the



Cheese Louise

ACCORDING TO THE LATEST trend in Republican thinking, if Ric Keller, the 39-year-old two-term representative from Orlando, Florida, is a little pudgy (and he is), he's got no one to blame but himself. And if your kids are fatties, too, well then, it's their own darn fault for being such gluttonous little monsters. Close to 65 percent of Americans are now overweight or obese, say government health statistics, and if the House has its way, individuals, groups, and state governments will

soon be prohibited from suing the companies that have made them fat, or that may cause future fattening. They may also be prohibited from a whole range of other suits against the food industry.

Keller, who launched the Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act last year to "bar overweight Americans from blaming the food industry for their obesity," lays the blame squarely on the square hips and round shoulders of America's increasingly overweight kids and teens.

This March, the House passed Keller's bill, 276 to 139. The Senate has yet to be heard from.

But, say leading House Democrats, the measure is so broadly worded that it may provide liability protection for companies that engage in negligence, serve contaminated food, or sell weight-loss products, such as ephedra and "fen-phen," that have allegedly caused heart attacks and fatalities. "H.R. 339 goes much further than its stated purpose of banning the small handful of private suits brought

against the food industry," wrote John Conyers in a Dear Colleague letter. "It also bans suits for harm caused by dietary supplements and mislabeling which have nothing to do with excess food consumption, and would prevent state law enforcement officials from bringing legal actions to enforce their own consumer protection laws."

Keller is one of the top recipients of food and restaurant PAC dollars in the House, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, having received \$31,500 from the food and beverage industry in 2003-04. Companies supporting him are no strangers to belt-loosening meals: Darden Restaurants, which owns the Red Lobster and Olive Garden chains; the FMC Corp., which makes biopolymer food additives and ingredients for "confections" and "flavored dessert gel"; and Outback Steakhouse, with seven restaurant chains including the rapidly growing Cheeseburger in Paradise franchise, which serves dishes such as "breaded and fried" oysters atop "a heaping helping of homemade French-fried potatoes resting on a slice of warm, toasted Cuban bread."

"Keller has a number of big food companies in his jurisdiction, and they have

Details

"Kellogg says it stands by the nutritional value of Cinnamon Marshmallow Scooby-Doo cereal."

—March 15 *WALL STREET JOURNAL*
story on food marketed to kids

managed to create a climate of hysteria," says John Banzhaf, a professor of public-interest law at George Washington University and an opponent of Keller's "cheeseburger bill," as it has become known.

"Congress has abdicated its responsibility to do anything about America's No. 2 preventable health problem [obesity] and instead is killing off the one thing [lawsuits] that is doing anything about the problem."

—GARANCE FRANKE-RUTA

Our (or Their) Man in Baghdad

EVER WONDER WHERE the neocons got all their crazy notions? That Iraq was awash in weapons of mass destruction? That Americans would be welcomed as liberators in tableaux reminiscent of 1944 France? That the nation could be converted, presto change-o, into a model democracy?

The answer to these and other knotty questions is one and the same: Ahmad Chalabi, the Iraqi exile and neocon pal whose political faction, the Iraqi National Congress (INC), produced defectors on demand to attest to the presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, and who him-

self guaranteed that the democratization of Iraq would be a walk in the park.

Imagine, then, the neos' consternation when none other than Ahmad Chalabi emerged as the ringleader of the five Shiite members of Iraq's Provisional Governing Council (PGC) who opposed ratifying the nation's interim constitution at the behest of the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the Shiite religious leader who feared that the document would give too much power to non-Shiite Iraqis.

It's not that Chalabi ever had a reputation as a straight shooter. A longtime associate of neocon honcho Richard Perle, Chalabi had so checkered a past—he was convicted for bank fraud in Jordan, fleeing the country reportedly with a cool \$70 million—that the CIA and State Department wanted nothing to do with him. The neocons, as usual, knew better, relying on the INC for dramatic if fictitious reports from defectors that Saddam Hussein was producing weapons of mass destruction. In return, the Pentagon flew their man Chalabi to Baghdad well before all other exiled leaders, armed his INC, and is still paying it for its "intelligence" leads.

Despite or because of Chalabi's chameleonlike qualities, he currently

heads the PGC's Economic and Finance Committee, which puts him in charge of the oil, trade, and finance ministries, plus the central bank.

Perle, al-Sistani, Donald Rumsfeld—plainly Chalabi has a deep if not particularly abiding commitment to whoever can help Chalabi. Here's a man for

whom the purpose of going to war in Iraq was never in the slightest doubt. This was a war to put Ahmad Chalabi in power, with whatever fabricated evidence and shifting allegiances were necessary to the task.

Can those neocons pick 'em or what?

—HAROLD MEYERSON

VAST RIGHT-WING CONSPIRACY

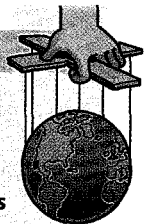
Here's how it starts: Several September 11 survivors complain about President Bush's use of Ground Zero imagery in his first round of television ads. Naturally, they must be America haters; naturally, they must be slimed. So Rush Limbaugh goes on the air and asserts that they are part of a group that receives funding from a foundation financed in part by Teresa Heinz Kerry, wife of John Kerry. He continues: "[T]hese people are poisoned. They have literally been poisoned by their hate. They have been poisoned by their rage. It is unbelievable, the depths to which they will sink."

Two of the women are Kristen Breitweiser and Monica Gabrielle. As it happens, they've distinguished themselves as eloquent spokeswomen for the families of 9-11 victims [see Shaun Waterman, "Truth Squad," page 45]. But, according to a report in *opednews.com*, they are not members of September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows, the group that is supposedly funded as a put-up job by the Democratic candidate's wife.

Some other critics are indeed members of Peaceful Tomorrows. But are they taking Teresa Heinz Kerry's handouts in a partisan effort to destroy America's great wartime president? Not exactly. The Heinz Endowments funds something called the Tides Foundation. The Tides Foundation has given some money to Peaceful Tomorrows. That seems like a link. But the money Heinz gives to Tides is earmarked strictly for projects Tides has undertaken in western Pennsylvania—providing career training for Pittsburgh high-schoolers and protecting the local environment. So no Heinz money goes to Peaceful Tomorrows. It stays in the Keystone State promoting what is clearly a radical agenda.

But none of this matters in Rush-land. And how might Freud interpret that quote about people being poisoned by their hate?

—Michael Tomasky





BRAVE NEW WORDS

DOESN'T UNIQUELY COMPORT CIA Director George Tenet's dainty way of pointing out that administration statements on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction were a dishonest portrayal of the intelligence community's assessments.

UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATION Scott McClellan's preferred description for stonewalling the 9-11 commission.

JOB GROWTH What we wouldn't be seeing so much of, according to Dick Cheney, without the Bush tax cuts of the past three years.

Strange Embedfellows

WASHINGTON POST STAFF writer Jim VandeHei is pounding the campaign trail alongside John Kerry, casting a critical, journalistic eye on the candidate. But how come his articles often read like Republican National Committee spin?

One particularly damning piece ran in late January on the newspaper's front page. The headline, "Kerry Leads in Lobby Money," certainly caught the attention of many readers. The article portrayed Kerry as a fund-raising hypocrite; according to VandeHei, Kerry had "raised more money from paid lobbyists than any other senator over the past 15 years."

That would make for a great story—were it true. But VandeHei's analysis completely neglected to include PAC money (which Kerry has historically refused) in its equations. Most important, VandeHei never compared Kerry's special-interest money to that of President Bush, though the headline and story imply otherwise.

In a more recent story, VandeHei reported on Kerry's promise to Florida seniors to "protect Social Security and Medicare." "Kerry ... has not detailed

the changes he has in mind," VandeHei wrote. In fact, Kerry's campaign Web site details a "Four-Step Plan to Restore Medicare," which provides ample information on the candidate's health-care platform. No other major papers accused Kerry of harboring such a cavalier attitude toward details when they covered this story.

So what accounts for VandeHei's take? Could it have something to do with his wife? Autumn Hanna VandeHei worked in Tom DeLay's office from 1997 until 2000; it's probably safe to assume she's a fairly conservative gal. But why wouldn't *The Washington Post* assign her husband to a different beat to avoid even the whiff of impropriety?

As it happens, VandeHei isn't the only one at the *Post* with a conjugal conflict of interest. Howard Kurtz, the paper's media critic, is married to Sherri Annis, a leading media consultant for the GOP. His job is to independently evaluate the media, hers to spin it to suit a conservative political agenda. The two don't really square.

Conservatives, of course, stay mum about these relationships, which often help to advance the cause. But when the tables are turned, these same players cry foul.

When Rick Santorum compared homosexuality to polygamy and incest in an Associated Press interview last April, the uproar was cacophonous. The AP reporter was Lara Lakes Jordan, the wife of Jim Jordan, Kerry's campaign chief at the time. GOP operatives protested loudly, and Santorum asserted that he had been set up and that his remarks were taken out of context.

The Kerry folks haven't gone after VandeHei, but by the standards that right-wingers invoke in assessing press coverage, he sure looks like fair game.

—AYELISH MCGARVEY

Gone Fishin'

SHORTLY AFTER THE NAVY destroyer *USS Cole* was bombed off the shore of Yemen on October 12, 2000, killing 17 American sailors, George W. Bush said he'd take a strong stand against terrorism if elected president.

"I want our nation to develop an anti-ballistic missile system that will have the capacity to bring certainty into this uncertain world," he said.

Huh?

Counterterrorism experts like Richard Clarke, a member of President Clinton's staff, weren't the only ones scratching their heads, writes Craig Unger in his blockbuster new book, *House of Bush, House of Saud: The Secret Relationship Between the World's Two Most Powerful Dynasties*. Clarke was almost certain that Osama bin Laden was behind the bombing of the *USS Cole*. And it didn't take a counterterrorism expert to know that bin Laden was not the kind

of guy who used ballistic missiles in his attacks.

Once Bush became president, Clarke tried to show him how al-Qaeda *could* be contained. No dice. Clarke's report, which recommended strikes on bin Laden's training camps at Tarnak Qila and Garmabat Ghar in Afghanistan, sat for weeks, untouched, on the president's desk, writes Unger.

On August 6, 2001, Bush was given another chance. He was taking a "working vacation" in Crawford, Texas. That morning, his Daily Briefing was headlined "Bin Laden Determined to Strike the U.S.," at least according to then-press secretary Ari Fleischer. Other sources, writes Unger, say the title was really "Bin Laden Determined to Strike *in* the U.S." (italics added).

Regardless of what the report was called, everyone (even Fleischer) agrees it contained information about Muslim terrorists who were planning to hijack American airliners. The president was unfazed. After the briefing, as Unger writes, Bush took the rest of the day off to go fishing. For bass. In his own Texas pond.

Finally, on September 24, after the terrorist attacks, Bush announced that the assets of 27 individuals or entities suspected of funneling money to terrorists would be frozen. Yet, as Unger points out, "[M]any of the named targets had been identified by Richard Clarke long before."

On February 21, 2003, Clarke quit his job. As he told *The New Yorker*, it was a relief: "You know that great feeling you get when you stop banging your head against a wall?"

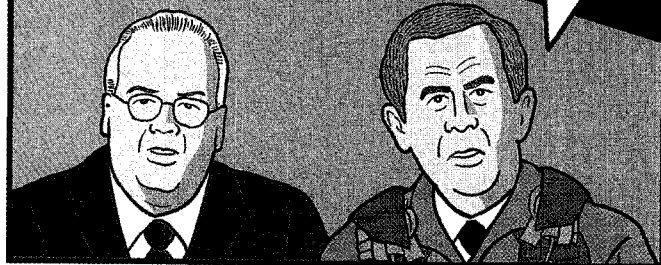
—TARA MCKELVEY

GRAND OLD PARTY LINE

THE ECONOMY'S DOING GREAT.

NOT THAT YOU'D KNOW IT FROM LISTENING TO THOSE **WHINING LIBERALS!** "THREE MILLION LOST JOBS, BLAH BLAH BLAH!"

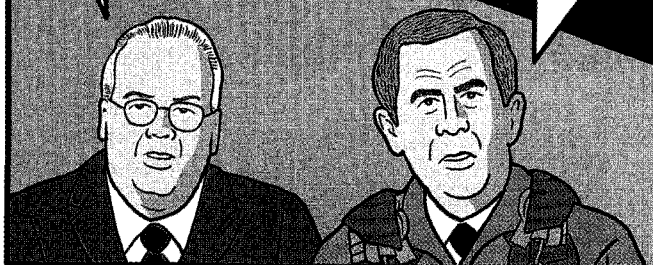
WHAT PART OF "JOBLESS RECOVERY" DON'T THEY **UNDERSTAND?**



THE WAR WAS COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED.

OKAY, WE DIDN'T FIND ANY **ACTUAL** WMDs-- BUT SADDAM **MIGHT** HAVE BEEN **THINKING** ABOUT **TRYING** TO **POSSIBLY** ACQUIRE THEM. SOMEDAY.

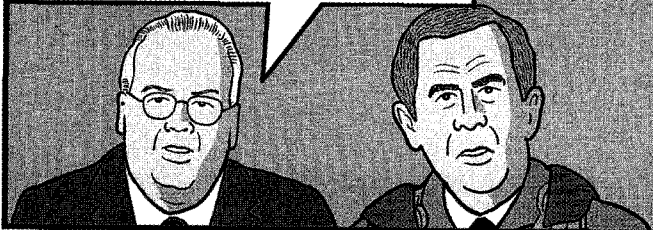
WITH A THREAT LIKE **THAT** HANGING OVER OUR HEADS, WE HAD NO **CHOICE** BUT TO **INVADE!**



GEORGE BUSH'S MILITARY RECORD IS ABOVE REPROACH.

I DON'T **CARE** IF NOBODY REMEMBERS ME SHOWING UP FOR DUTY IN ALABAMA! I WAS THERE AND I'VE GOT THE INCONCLUSIVE RECORDS TO **PROVE** IT!

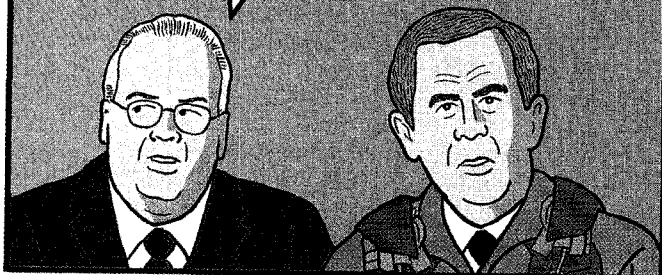
HECK, I CAN BARELY REMEMBER WHICH LOBBYIST I HAD LUNCH WITH **YESTERDAY!**



YOU CAN'T SWITCH HORSES MIDSTREAM.

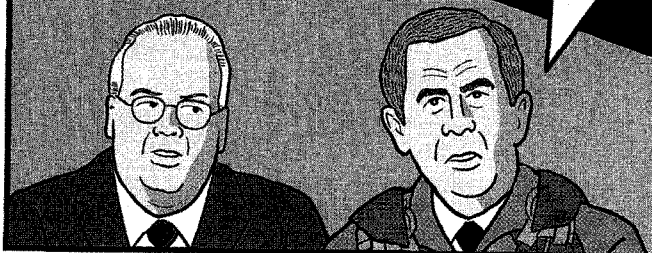
GOD **CHOSE** ME FOR THIS JOB, YOU KNOW! ANYONE WHO VOTES FOR **KERRY** IS **DEFYING** GOD! RIGHT, KARL?

UH--THAT'S RIGHT, SIR. **DEFYING** GOD.



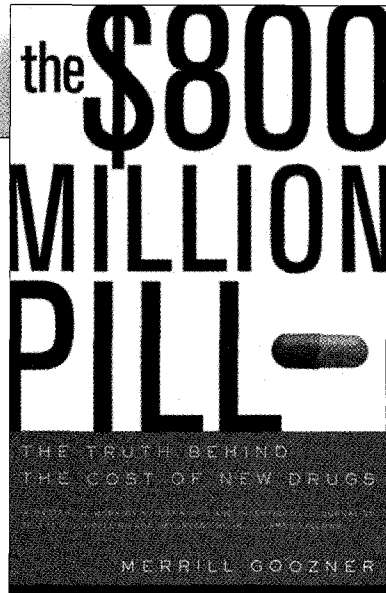
THAT'S OUR STORY AND WE'RE STICKING TO IT. THEN AGAIN, WE **COULD** JUST DECLARE A NATIONAL STATE OF EMERGENCY AND CANCEL THE ELECTION ENTIRELY.

THAT "MEET THE PRESS" INTERVIEW SURE SEEMED LIKE AN EMERGENCY TO **ME...**



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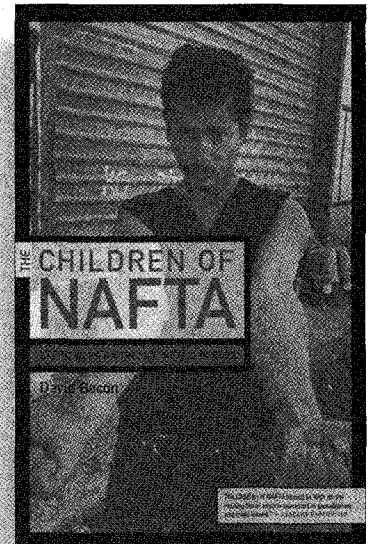
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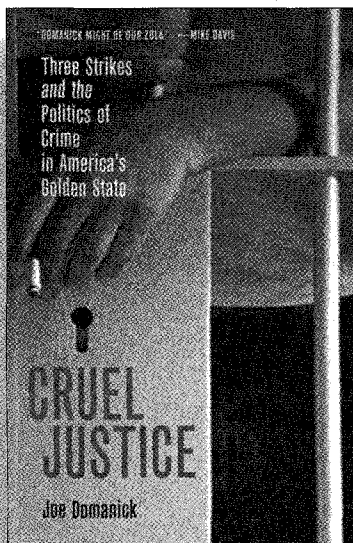
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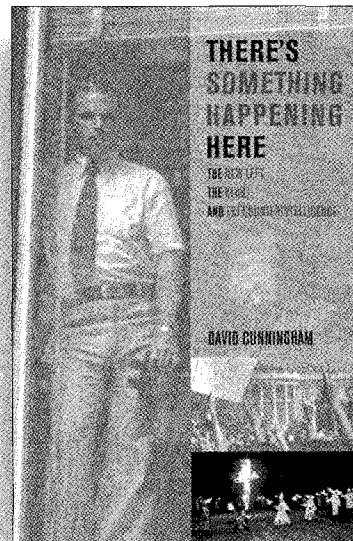


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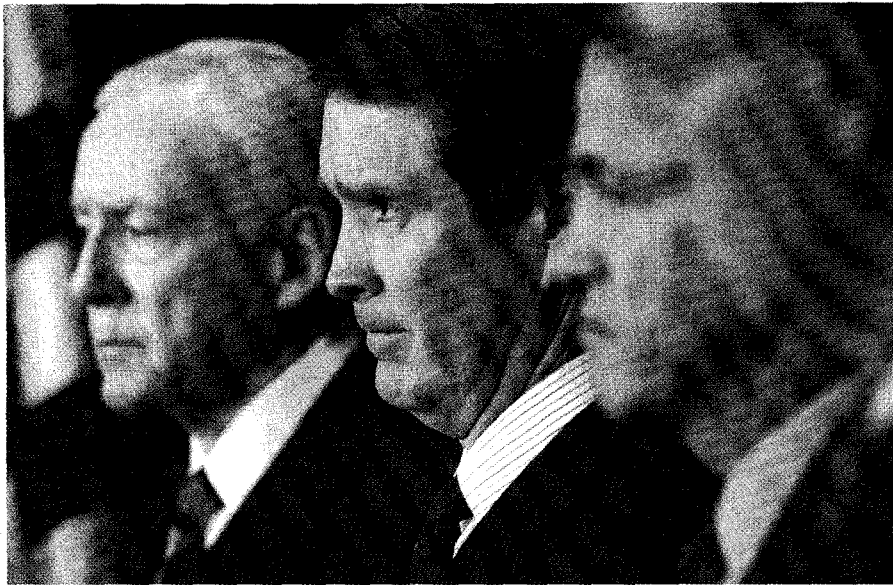
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Dispatches



Long Faces: Senate Republicans gather last November after a 40-hour Democratic filibuster, a rare victory.

Injudicious

The Senate Judiciary Committee has long been partisan. But with recess appointments and the GOP stealing computer files, it's now also rigged.

BY HEIDI PAUKEN

WITH CIVIL RIGHTS, REPRODUCTIVE rights, environmental protections, workers' rights, and yes, even the presidency (see *Bush v. Gore*) at stake, it's no surprise that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary is a hot spot for politics—not the handshaking politics of the campaign trail but a passionate, big-picture politics where senators duke it out over the ideological balance of our nation's courts. The committee, which vets the president's nominees for the federal bench, has surely seen excitement over the years, but it was always still the Senate—navy suits, cordial smiles, professional conduct.

Not anymore. In their latest pursuits

to pack the courts, Republicans have bent, twisted, and broken the rules, spawning unmatched acrimony, a criminal investigation, and some really angry Democrats.

According to George W. Bush, we have only the Democrats' "unprecedented obstructionist tactics" to blame. But how obstructed can the process be when committee Republicans outnumber Democrats 10 to 9 and a majority vote sends a nominee to the Senate floor? Moreover, the Senate has already confirmed 171 Bush-backed judges, including 71 since January 2003—more than any year between 1995 and 2000 of Bill Clinton's presidency and almost double the yearly average during those years.

How are they managing it, despite the president's controversial nominees, a slim Senate majority, and Democratic protests? Lift the hood and you'll see that the Senate Judiciary Committee is not so much a well-run machine as a well-rigged one, built by the White House to generate a steady stream of federal judges, as Bush promised, in the mold of Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas.

The Judiciary Committee has "always been a cockpit of really bitter social battles," says Herman Schwartz, American University law professor and author of the forthcoming *Right Wing Justice: The Conservative Campaign to Take Over the Courts*. But when Schwartz worked as chief counsel to Democrats on the Senate's antitrust subcommittee, he witnessed a collegiality that has since disappeared. "The [committee] debates were sharp but they were witty. ... The quips, the sharp digs, usually quite good humored, were always there. ... It was very different." So were the committee rules. During the six Clinton years that Republicans controlled Congress, Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch faithfully administered the "blue-slip" policy, which allowed home-state senators to effectively veto nominees by not returning their evaluation forms to the committee. In 1998, the slips carried language stating that "[n]o further proceedings on this nominee will be scheduled until both blue slips have been returned by the nominee's home state senators."

Today Hatch still reigns, but the blue-slip policy doesn't: The Utah Republican announced early in 2003 that the slips were merely advisory, claiming that that had always been the case. "He'll come up with these really contorted reasons for why [a nominee] is moving over the objection of their home-state senators," says Marcia Kuntz,

director of the Judicial Selection Project at the Alliance for Justice, an association of advocacy groups. In the case of Henry Saad, Bush's 6th Circuit nominee with Federalist Society credentials and a distaste for workers' rights, Hatch argued that even though Michigan's two Democratic senators hadn't returned blue slips, Saad would have a hearing because the senators received "White House consultation." As Kuntz explains, "Consultation from the White House consists of simply telling you that 'this is what we're going to do.'"

Republican rule bending reached new heights in February 2003 when committee Democrats, feeling that they had not had sufficient time to consider two nominees at hand, refused to participate in a rushed vote, invoking Rule IV, which says that at least one member of the minority must agree to end discussion. "[Y]ou have no right to continue a filibuster in this committee," Hatch told Democrats, and unilaterally forced the vote.

Hatch played fast and loose with the rules again last July, that time to speed along Alabama Attorney General William Pryor Jr.'s nomination to the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, disregarding a pending investigation into concerns that Pryor had solicited contributions from state businesses for the Republican Attorneys General Association. Pryor's nomination ultimately met a filibuster on the Senate floor, in no small part because, as a *Washington Post* editorial put it, Pryor "is a parody of what Democrats imagine Mr. Bush to be plotting for the federal courts."

Not to be deterred, Bush celebrated this year's Martin Luther King Jr. Day recess by invoking his constitutional power to make "recess appointments," putting Charles Pickering Sr. on the 5th Circuit. Pickering, another of 2003's six filibustered nominees, has a civil-rights record that's questionable at best. Then, during the Presidents' Day recess, Bush installed Pryor despite his incomplete investigation and loudly trumpeted views that *Roe v. Wade* is "the worst abomination" in the history of constitutional law. Both recess appointments will probably last until the end of 2005, when Pickering and Pryor face the confirmation process once more.

Past presidents have made more than

300 recess appointments, but few in recent years. Neither George Bush Senior nor Ronald Reagan made one, and Clinton's sole recess appointment, Roger Gregory, racially integrated the 4th Circuit and filled a seat that had been vacant for almost 11 years. The Senate reconfirmed Gregory in the summer of 2001, with just one dissenting vote (from Trent Lott, who opposed the idea of a "recess appointment").

As the *Prospect* goes to press, the extent of Republicans' ruthless tactics on the Judiciary Committee are coming to light. On March 4, Senate Sergeant at Arms William Pickle concluded a four-month investigation and released a 65-page report confirming that at least two GOP Judiciary Committee staffers, preying on a security weakness, had accessed and downloaded 4,670 internal Democratic memos from a shared server.

According to the report, nominations clerk Jason Lundell began hacking into Democratic files in the fall of 2001. At the direction of Judiciary counsel Manuel Miranda, who later moved to Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist's office, Lundell continued to survey and steal documents for 18 months. According to the report, Miranda told Lundell that "Senator Hatch wanted the staff to use any means necessary to support President Bush's nominees." Hatch disavows any knowledge of the theft. Once stolen, the memos found their way onto the conservative Coalition for a Fair Judiciary's Web site, as well as the November 14, 2003, *Wall Street Journal* editorial page.

While Hatch called the theft "im-

proper, unethical, and simply unacceptable," we have yet to learn who distributed the memos or to which level they traveled. The White House? The Justice Department? Pending nominees? Pickle had little success chasing those answers. *The Wall Street Journal* and the Coalition for a Fair Judiciary refused to be interviewed for the investigation, and Miranda wouldn't provide the names of his White House legislative contacts, or his friend who made a backup disk of the Democratic files.

Democrats want answers—and a criminal investigation. As ranking member Patrick Leahy of Vermont explained to the committee, "Someone who is removed from politics is essential." On March 12, six committee Democrats and Republicans sent a letter to the Justice Department requesting the appointment of a professional prosecutor "or, if appropriate, a special counsel—who ... will not be removable from this assignment except in case of extraordinary improprieties." If one is appointed, his or her discoveries could certainly intensify tensions on the committee. "What we're talking about," warns American University's Schwartz about the committee's functioning, "is a rubber band that's being stretched very far, and the question is when will that rubber band break."

If you talk to some Democrats, it's already broken. And the committee is not likely to be functioning well anytime soon. Bush's 2004 strategy, sure to include pushing right-wing jurists any way he can, will certainly add more rancor to the mix. ■

Road Nap

Bush has been a friend to Israel—rhetorically. But look at the record: a disengaged America and an Israel far less safe than it was four years ago.

BY GERSHOM GORENBERG

HERE'S THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM, stated at a sadly conventional Israeli news event: "With respect to Israel, [George W.] Bush has been one of the best presidents we have ever had."

The speaker was James Tisch, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The venue was Jerusalem's Keren Hayesod Street on the bluster-

ing morning of February 22, moments after a suicide bomb shredded a bus and its riders. When the bomb went off, Tisch and other establishment Jewish American leaders were inside a luxury hotel a few hundred yards away, in a briefing with Israel's military chief of staff. They headed out to see the grisly scene and were buttonholed by a reporter for commentary.

And here's a more expert analysis of the American president's performance. "There is a major gap between the perception that Bush has been good for Israel and the reality of Israel's terrible circumstances," says Martin Indyk, former U.S. ambassador to Israel and veteran of Middle East diplomacy. On the phone from Washington to Jerusalem, Indyk chooses his words with a diplomat's care, but he is absolutely clear about his message: By repeatedly evading diplomatic opportunities to end Israeli-Palestinian violence, Bush has committed "an abrogation of America's responsibility to its ally Israel." In the long term, "Israel can't survive without peace ... and Israel can't achieve peace without the active involvement of the American president," Indyk says, adding forcefully, "Bush wasn't prepared to do that."

Indyk, now at the Brookings Institution, is not alone in that view. Diplomatic experts in the United States and Israel, while not making endorsements for November, point to an all-too-familiar gulf between Bush's rhetoric and his actions. Yes, the president has maintained the traditional U.S. alliance with Israel; he has spoken firmly in support of the Jewish state; he has kept his door open to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. But when it comes to helping Israel solve its central, existential problem—containing and ending the conflict with the Palestinians—the Bush administration has failed to use America's position as the only possible mediator.

As Indyk bluntly puts it, "People who say Bush has been a great friend of Israel have to explain how come, after four years of [a] Bush administration, Israel is in the worst shape it's been for decades." And from the uncomfortable vantage point of Jerusalem, I would add that those who support Bush should ask themselves where four

more years of Bush will leave Israel.

This is important because at least some Jewish American voters have been turning toward Bush since his election in 2000. The American Jewish Committee's annual survey of Jewish opinion, published in January, found that in a John Kerry–George W. Bush match, Bush would get 31 percent of the Jewish vote and Kerry 59 percent. This compares with just 24 percent of the committee's 1,000 Jewish survey respondents who say they voted for Bush in 2000; others have estimated Jewish support for Bush last time at 19 percent. As the committee noted when releasing the current figures, "Winning 31 percent of the Jewish vote would make President Bush the most popular Republican presidential candidate with Jews since Ronald Reagan won a second term in 1984." It would also give Bush

ices. Israelis are poorer than before it began, and young people are questioning their future here.

Indeed, argues Aaron David Miller, the American ex-diplomat who advised the last six secretaries of state on Arab-Israeli negotiations, the unresolved conflict is undermining "Israel's viability as [a] democratic, Jewish state"—and therefore also undermining the "value affinity" cementing Israel's alliance with the United States. In the starkest terms, peace is a strategic necessity for Israel. And for the United States, Miller stresses, Israeli-Arab peace is an almost unique foreign-policy issue where "our national interest, our moral interest, and our capacity to make a bad situation better all coincide."

So how does Bush's Israeli policy look in light of these interests? One of his primary decisions has been to fos-

Some 900 Israelis and foreigners have died in Palestinian attacks since Bush took office. That's more than 10 times the fatalities of the previous three years.

a better chance in the election because Jews traditionally turn out in high numbers—by one estimate, they make up 4 percent of U.S. voters, twice their weight in the population, and are concentrated in states that can swing the Electoral College. Jews are also known as major donors to Democratic campaigns, support Democrats can hardly afford to lose.

But Jews who favor Bush for his Israel policy should look more closely at his record. Some 900 Israelis—civilians and soldiers—and foreigners have died in Palestinian attacks since Bush swore his oath of office. That's more than 10 times the fatalities in the previous three years, including the first months of the al-Aqsa Intifada. In Jerusalem, the chorus of ambulance sirens after a bombing has become a terrifyingly normal part of life. At my son's small high school, three 10th-graders out of about 60 have lost one of their parents in recent terrorist attacks. Meanwhile, the intifada has also crippled Israel's economy, leading to huge cutbacks in education and social serv-

ter an unusually tight relationship with Sharon. "Bush has helped Sharon more than any other [U.S.] president has helped an Israeli prime minister in recent times," notes Alon Liel, former director-general of Israel's Foreign Ministry. Such an alliance may be "a political asset of the first order" for Sharon in Israel, as Liel notes, and it may buff Bush's pro-Israel image at home. But it hasn't advanced either American or Israeli interests in resolving the conflict. Still, losing the role of mediator doesn't seem to matter to the administration. As Liel puts it, "Bush's drive on the Israeli-Palestinian issue is almost nonexistent."

The administration has also expressed support for Israel at international forums, following the pattern of U.S. foreign policy. But, says Indyk, "Bush has done nothing effective to help Israel end the intifada. There were multiple occasions in which effective presidential intervention to ... restart the peace process would have done much more to help Israel than a veto in the [United Nations] Security Council."

Indeed, the administration has abandoned all of its short-lived diplomatic efforts. In June 2001, following a suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv nightclub, Bush sent CIA Director George Tenet to the region. Tenet came up with a cease-fire plan, but no serious diplomatic push was made to implement it. The next winter, General Anthony Zinni made sporadic negotiating forays. Secretary of State Colin Powell "said Zinni ... would stay till he got an agreement," Indyk says. "At the first sign of terrorism, he came home."

The clearest example of Bush's failure, experts say, came after the Iraq War, when the president presented his road map for peace and the Palestinian Authority met U.S. demands for new leadership by appointing the moderate Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as prime minister. "This was a potential Palestinian [Anwar] Sadat," who told people "in Arabic about how bad terrorism was," Indyk says. Bush held a summit with Sharon and Abbas in Aqaba, Jordan, invited Abbas to Washington—and then dropped out. He offered Abbas paltry economic aid and did nothing to pressure Sharon to show Palestinians that embracing the moderate Abbas could improve their lives. (It's almost grotesquely ironic that Sharon is now talking about evacuating Gaza Strip settlements unilaterally: Had he negotiated just such a pullout last summer, he could have shown the Palestinian public that moderation pays major dividends. Instead, Abbas was pushed out of office by September, and the road map was effectively dead.)

"President Bush gives great Middle East speeches," says Indyk. "He says all the right things. The problem is in the implementation."

Is there a better model? Israeli strategic expert Yossi Alpher cites Henry Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy in the 1970s—when an emissary who clearly spoke in the president's name stayed in the region for weeks on end—and of Jimmy Carter's personal mission to the Mideast during the Israeli-Egyptian peace process.

Alpher says one Democratic senator asked him what the party's nominee should say on the Mideast. Don't

make Howard Dean's mistake of pledging to be "evenhanded," Alpher answered. Instead, the candidate should stress his tie to Israel and his commitment to sending to the Mideast a very senior emissary with a mandate to speak in his name.

By chance or not, John Kerry has reportedly done just that. Before the New Hampshire primary, the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz* quoted him as saying that as president, he would send Carter or Bill Clinton to the region as his envoy.

It's a message that Democrats should push this year. Despite conventional wisdom, a Jewish shift to Bush isn't inevitable. Bush has squandered the chance to help Israel reach peace, and Democrats must—and can—offer an alternative. ■

GERSHOM GORENBERG is a senior correspondent for the Prospect. He is the author of *The End of Days: Fundamentalism and the Struggle for the Temple Mount*.

Immigration Conflagration

Bush's guest-worker plan was a clumsy attempt to pander to Hispanics. It didn't please them, and now border-state conservatives are up in arms.

BY MAX BLUMENTHAL

PEOPLE EITHER LOVE TOM TANCREDO, the Republican representative from Colorado's 6th District (home of Columbine High School), or they hate him. But they all agree on one thing: He is a man of character. Indeed, he has defined his political career by his principled stand on immigration. In September 2002, after reading a glowing *Denver Post* profile of an 18-year-old undocumented immigrant honor student, he reported the student's family to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, forcing the family to go into hiding.

Tancredo's principles have frequently set him against members of his own party—including President George W. Bush. Ever since Bush entered the White House, promising to reach an immigration accord with Mexican President Vicente Fox, Tancredo has accused him of pandering to Hispanic voters. In April 2002, as the Associated Press reported, Tancredo got an angry phone call from Karl Rove, who chewed him out for 40 minutes and told him, "Never darken the doorstep of the White House again."

But today Bush is on the defensive. His plan to grant guest-worker permits to immigrants has been met with a maelstrom of right-wing anger, thrusting Tancredo to the forefront

of a mounting revolt.

In California, Arizona, and Colorado, conservatives are propelling anti-immigrant ballot measures. And in the Republican primaries, some of Bush's staunchest congressional allies are facing challenges from candidates who are exploiting the anti-Bush, anti-immigrant sentiment. The intraparty division could cause a blowback, provoking outraged Hispanic Democrats to turn out to the polls in high numbers. In Arizona, a battleground state with a high Hispanic and conservative white population, the combination spells trouble for Bush.

As Mike Madrid, a Republican operative who handled Hispanic outreach for Bush's gubernatorial campaigns, says, the guest-worker plan was calculated to provoke opposition. "You have the left going nuts on one side of [Bush], saying the guest-worker plan doesn't go far enough," he explains. "And you have the right going nuts on the other, saying it goes too far. It makes [Bush] look moderate, like a compassionate conservative. It's that symbolism that defines a political strategy."

The plan suggests a revival of the middle-ground strategy on immigration issues seen during Bush's tenure as governor of Texas, where he tried to avoid

demonizing Hispanics while mollifying Republicans. According to Madrid, Bush's message was, "Anyone who's willing to walk through 300 miles of desert for \$6 an hour is someone I want working in Texas." And in this year's 2004 State of the Union address, he described his guest-worker plan as "good for our economy because employers will find needed workers in an honest and orderly system."

Yet conservatives had already been rumbling about a \$2.4 trillion White House budget—with an increase for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The guest-worker plan thus became a lighting rod for their indignation.

"This is something that's got the Republican base energized in a way that other nonconservative policies—like the increase in funding for the NEA—won't necessarily," says Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, an anti-immigration think tank in Washington. "This is something that gets people's blood pumping when they get up in the morning."

At a House Republican retreat in Philadelphia on January 29, the anger was unleashed. When top Bush aides asked members of Congress at the retreat what the most important issue was among their constituencies, "[A]lmost immediately, everyone was saying, 'Immigration. Immigration,'" says Tancredo's press secretary, Carlos Espinosa. Tancredo lapped it up. "Tom was sitting there smiling like a little kid—you should have seen him," adds Espinosa. "He was so excited that people were finally starting to speak out about immigration."

A week after the retreat, Tancredo toughened the language of a ballot measure he'd introduced to bar undocumented immigrants from social services with added restrictions on vaccinations and library cards. The measure is designed not only to drive immigrants from the state but also to nullify Bush's guest-worker program if it were enacted. In California, a similar measure called Save Our State has been proposed. On February 21, hundreds of supporters rallied outside the state GOP convention. Tancredo was a keynote speaker, saying he knew a gynecologist

who regularly asked patients about Bush's guest-worker plan and found it rated "right below genital herpes."

Meanwhile, Arizona state Representative Randy Graf, the majority whip in a right-wing-dominated legislature, has written another anti-immigrant measure, Protect Arizona Now, which, according to Arizona PBS affiliate KAET, enjoys the support of 82 percent of registered Republican voters.

Despite the popularity of these measures among Republicans, Governors Arnold Schwarzenegger of California and Bill Owens of Colorado, as well as other GOP leaders, have handled them with caution. That's not surprising. In 1994, then-California Governor Pete Wilson endorsed an anti-immigrant ballot measure, Proposition 187, that sent Hispanics flocking to the Democratic Party, helping it capture the

suburban voters, he is not well-received in rural Cochise County, Arizona, a key entry point for migrants from Mexico. At a January 15 town meeting, demonstrators there heckled Kolbe and displayed an effigy of a murdered border-patrol agent marked "Bush Amnesty." Later, they piled trash—supposedly left on their property by migrants—in the doorway of Kolbe's county field office.

"[Kolbe] has turned his back on America," Todd Evans, president of the Southeast Arizona Republicans Club, told the *Sierra Vista Herald* after the meeting. "Many of us believe he doesn't deserve to be a Republican. We have been betrayed by his ideas."

Two days later, Tancredo spoke at a fundraiser for the Cochise County Republican Committee and was greeted warmly by a crowd that included local

Tancredo spoke at an immigrant-bashing rally, saying he knew a gynecologist who asked patients about Bush's plan and found it rated "below genital herpes."

governorship and a majority in the legislature by 1998.

Yet it's voter turnout that most worries Republicans. "When Latinos can be influential is not when they become more Democratic, because they're already pretty Democratic. It's when some issue or leader drives more of them to turn out," says Louis DiSipio, a political-science professor at the University of California, Irvine. DiSipio says the ballot measures "will confirm the sense Latinos already have that the Republicans are not to be trusted."

A gaggle of Republican candidates running on anti-immigration platforms may widen the rift between the GOP and Hispanics. Among them is Jim Oberweis, an Illinois dairy baron running for U.S. Senate who says he has "10,000 reasons" to be in the race. Those reasons are, of course, the 10,000 "illegal aliens" who are entering the country each day. And in Arizona, Graf is getting ready to challenge incumbent Representative Jim Kolbe, an author of Bush's guest-worker plan.

While Kolbe may be popular among

officials—and Graf. Many chanted, "Tancredo for president!"

In his speech, Tancredo vowed to support Bush while redoubling his efforts to sink the guest-worker plan. "This is a basic fundamental difference about how we view the future of the country, and despite supporting the president, this is not a fight I will walk away from," he said, according to the *Herald*.

Graf says he's still loyal to Bush, though he's concerned that other Arizona Republicans may not be. "When we go to the polls, President Bush won Arizona four years ago and we expect him to win again. But there is a part of the population that's questionable right now," he says. "You think someone like Bush, who's from a border state, would be somewhat more sympathetic to the culture down here." ■

MAX BLUMENTHAL is a freelance writer living in Los Angeles. His work has appeared in *The American Prospect*, *The Washington Monthly*, and at *Salon.com*.

Social Security's Zealous Raider

BY ROBERT S. MCINTYRE

Twenty-five years ago, I wrote a playful spoof pretending that the top Republican member of the House Ways and Means Committee had proposed capping the income tax at \$50,000 in earnings, with everything above that tax-free. Although GOP

affection for unfair taxation was almost as strong then as it is today, nobody really went that far. But Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan has recently offered his own version of my ostensibly nutty idea. In February, he told the Senate Budget Committee that he wants to keep the capped Social Security payroll tax while slashing those pesky retirement benefits. He would use the savings to help finance a permanent extension of President Bush's tax cuts.

In other words, our esteemed Fed chairman believes that an even greater share of a tax that people stop paying when they earn \$87,000 a year should be diverted toward paying for tax cuts for people who make much, much more.

Until the early 1980s, Greenspan was known as a hack right-wing economist with an odd affection for Ayn Rand and crooked savings and loans. He achieved public acclaim in 1983 when he teamed up with Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan on what became part two of the great Social Security preservation project. Part one, enacted in 1977, increased the taxes that pay for Social Security by 30 percent. The Greenspan-Moynihan effort cut retirement benefits by almost as much (though the lion's share of those cuts is still being phased in).

In combination, these changes were supposed to convert Social Security from a struggling pay-as-you-go system to one that would be partially pre-funded and fully solvent. Since then, Social Security has taken in far more than it has spent (\$1.5 trillion in surpluses so far and growing rapidly), with the excess socked away in government bonds as a reserve to pay future benefits.

The case for pre-funding Social Security depended critically, however, on the premise that the rest of federal budget would be roughly balanced—a goal then considered quite embarrassing to fail to achieve. If so, when the baby boomers retired, the government would have no debt other than what it owed Social Security, and it would find it easy to repay that debt without excessive taxes or borrowing. (And once Social Security had bought all the available federal bonds, it would build up huge additional investments, just like states hold for their pension plans.) If not, Social

Security would still be hard for future generations to afford.

Had things worked out as advertised, by the time George W. Bush took office there would have been no national debt except for the amounts owed to Social Security, and Social Security's solvency would be ensured until at least 2041. But our leaders—Ronald Reagan and George Bush Senior—renege on the deal. Instead of balancing their budgets, they ran giant deficits and brazenly spent every penny of Social Security's reserves on tax cuts and other programs.

By the mid-1990s, it had become apparent to Senator Moynihan that the Social Security preservation project had been a hoax all along. He began to call for rolling back the payroll tax rate and returning to pay as you go, with the hope that the lost Social Security taxes would be replaced by more progressive levies.

During Bill Clinton's second term, however, a miracle occurred: Spurred by Clinton's 1993 tax increases on the rich, tight budgeting, and a fabulously growing economy, the regular budget swung into balance. By vetoing several proposed tax cuts, Clinton kept it that way, as the original Social Security deal had envisioned.

Sadly, that period of responsibility was short-lived. George W. Bush has enthusiastically raided the Social Security trust fund to help offset his tax cuts for the wealthy. And now Alan Greenspan wants to go even further down that road—which, as Moynihan came to suspect, may have been Greenspan's goal all along.

There's no doubt that as a quasi-pension system, Social Security is very progressive, offering benefits that are a much higher share of contributions to lower-income workers than to higher-income workers. But if the Social Security tax is used to pay for the government's regular activities, it's about as regressive a tax as one can imagine—one that rich people are nearly exempt from paying, even though they get the biggest benefits from the way we structure our society.

If we can't find leaders a lot more trustworthy than Bush and Greenspan, maybe it's time to admit error and stop pretending to pre-fund Social Security. ■

ROBERT S. MCINTYRE is the director of Citizens for Tax Justice.





SHE TOLD ASHCROFT: "Mind your own business." The Court agreed -- it's up to the states!

Angel McClary Raich has an inoperable brain tumor. After her doctor tried everything to keep her from wasting away, he finally recommended marijuana. It saved her life. What's more it got her out of a wheelchair and back with her husband and children.

But the Attorney General says there's no such thing as medical marijuana -- even though studies show otherwise¹ - and it's legal in 9 states. John Ashcroft has been sending his troops out to bust the sick and dying and their care-givers. He even tried to intimidate their doctors but that's where the Supreme Court drew the line.²

Now the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has joined with Angel Raich.³ They're telling the Attorney General to butt out.

A TIME-CNN poll shows that 80 percent of Americans support medical marijuana for the seriously ill.⁴ Isn't it time for the federal government to catch up with science and the people?⁵

www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org, www.DrugWarFacts.org, www.MedicalMJ.org
Mike Gray, Chair; Robert Field, Co-Chair; Kevin Zeese, President 717-288-0600

¹"Marijuana and Medicine" Inst.of Medicine, 1999 ²Walters v. Conant 03-40 ³Raich v. Ashcroft 9th Cir. No. 03-15481 ⁴TIME Nov.4 2002
⁵To find out what you can do to help patients like Angel, contact Americans for Safe Access www.SafeAccessNow.org 1-888-929-4367

Misoverestimated

Yes, the hard-liners have outflanked and humiliated Colin Powell. But don't feel sorry for him. He has no one to blame but himself.

BY MICHAEL STEINBERGER

IN JULY 2003, PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH MADE A five-nation tour of Africa. The purpose of the visit was to cast American foreign policy in a gentler light after the diplomatic donnybrook over Iraq—by, among other things, showcasing the Bush administration's seriousness about combating Africa's AIDS pandemic.

But Africa didn't have the president's undivided attention. En route from Washington to Dakar, Senegal, Secretary of State Colin Powell met privately with Bush aboard Air Force One to discuss North Korea. It was a fraught subject for Powell. Shortly after taking office in 2001, he had told reporters that Bush planned to continue the Clinton administration's policy of engagement, only to be forced by the White House to eat his words the very next day: Any policy that carried the taint of Clintonism was to be reversed, and Bush did not do business with evil regimes. The president would later name North Korea a member of the "axis of evil," and just a month before his Africa trip, he had given a speech reaffirming his hard line toward Pyongyang.

For two years, Powell had worked behind the scenes to ease tensions with North Korea and keep the channels of communication open—going so far as to hold a brief one-on-one discussion with his North Korean counterpart during an Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Brunei in July 2002, a meeting said to be impromptu but that actually was not.

Now, with postwar Iraq spinning out of control and North Korea apparently proceeding with its nuclear-weapons program, Powell felt the time had come to try to get Bush to take a more constructive approach to the simmering crisis in East Asia. During the meeting on Air Force One, Powell made the case for opening bilateral talks with Pyongyang. "You know, we probably ought to have some direct contact with the North Koreans," Powell told the president. Surprisingly, Bush agreed, marking a major about-face for a president not known for about-faces and seemingly paving the way for a bold initiative to help ease the standoff with North Korea. Bush's decision also handed Powell what looked to be a rare and important victory over administration hawks.

But seven weeks later, when six-party talks on North Korea began in Beijing, James Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the lead U.S. negotiator, went with instructions not to enter into bilateral discussions. During a

break in the negotiations, the North Koreans tried to ask Kelly—technically accountable only to Powell and the president—a few questions directly. Kelly followed his instructions and refused to respond.

Colin Powell had lost another one.

WHEN POWELL WAS APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE, SUCH was his stature at home and abroad that he was widely expected to be the new administration's vicar of foreign policy. Three years on, he finds himself the fig leaf of that foreign policy—the moderate front man for an administration that has been anything but moderate in its statecraft. On almost every critical issue—the Kyoto Protocol, the future of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Middle East peace process, North Korea, and, of course, Iraq—Powell has been the odd man out, his influence minimal to nonexistent.

That's obvious in Washington, where Powell's vanishing act is a source of curiosity and not a little sadness. More importantly, it's obvious overseas; one U.S. official says French President Jacques Chirac recently told him, "When Powell agrees with us, we know it doesn't mean anything." Having hoped to model his tenure on that of another military man turned diplomat, George Marshall, who as Harry Truman's secretary of state devised the courageous plan to rebuild Europe in the aftermath of World War II, Powell now evokes comparisons to Warren Christopher and William Rogers, two of the least effective secretaries of state in recent memory.

Outgunned, undermined, and frequently humiliated, Powell is expected to step down next January whether or not Bush wins a second term. His unhappiness is an open secret. One former National Security Council staffer recalls being told by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage back in 2002 that both Armitage and Powell wanted out but "can't leave because it would hurt the president." Powell has chosen to remain associated with a foreign policy that has been calamitous in its application, if not necessarily its goals. The irony, of course, is that it is a foreign policy over which Powell has exercised little influence. But resigning out of pique or principle is not the Powell way, and his willingness to conspire in his own diminishment is entirely in character: As an Army staffer during the Vietnam War, he failed to investigate reports of the My Lai massacre; as Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's military attaché in the 1980s, he put



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aside his own objections and helped funnel weapons to Iran as part of the arms-for-hostages deal.

How did it all go so wrong for Powell? In part, he has fallen victim to the wrath of Dick Cheney; having soured on Powell since their days in the first Bush administration, and having witnessed firsthand Powell's bureaucratic skills (he is one of the all-time great Washington operators), the vice president set out to kneecap him this time around, usurping his authority, filling key positions with officials hostile to Powell, and otherwise maneuvering to thwart his influence. Powell has had problems, too, with other key administration figures, not least Bush himself; they have little personal chemistry and see the world through very different lenses.

His troubles with Cheney and Bush have rendered Powell a sympathetic figure outside conservative circles—a tragic figure in the minds of many liberals. In fact, though, Powell has mostly been hobbled by his own liabilities. He came into office without a strong and specific idea either of what he wanted to accomplish at Foggy Bottom or of what America's role in the world should be. At heart he is a functionary, not a visionary, a doer rather than a thinker. Unfortunately for him, he is serving a president who likes to throw bombs (the metaphoric and occasionally the literal kind) at a moment in history when big thinking and bold action have been required. The neocons, for better or worse, had a vision, and something usually trumps nothing.

As his tenure winds down, Powell is finally getting a George Marshall moment, but probably not quite of the sort he had in mind. On July 1, the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq becomes the U.S. Embassy, and responsibility for administering Iraq passes from the Pentagon to the State Department, which was initially shut out of all postwar operations by the Pentagon and by Cheney. Denied the opportunity to conceive a reconstruction plan à la Marshall, Powell will now spend his last months in office trying to tidy up the mess that his antagonists in the administration made.

THE DECISION TO WAGE PREEMPTIVE WAR IN ORDER TO depose Saddam Hussein and trigger a democratic revolution across the Arab world has shaken the international system to its core and will have repercussions for decades to come. Powell views every military engagement through the dark prism of his Vietnam experience and believes that war should always be a last resort. Thus, his friends and associates are unanimous in their view that this was not the policy he would have chosen had the decision been his—certainly not while U.S. troops were still engaged in Afghanistan, and certainly not at the cost, in terms of American credibility, that was ultimately incurred. “It is not something he would have advocated,” says one longtime colleague who, like most people interviewed for this story, insisted on anonymity out of respect for Powell, whom many in Washington still revere on a personal level.

And Powell dropped plenty of hints in public that he was unconvinced of the need to take out Hussein in the wake of September 11. Two months after the terrorist attacks, he was profiled by Bill Keller in *The New York Times Magazine*. By

then it was already known that Iraq had been discussed by Bush and his senior advisers during a meeting at Camp David the weekend after 9-11, with Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz pushing the idea of regime change. Speaking to Keller a few days later, Powell said cooler heads had prevailed and seemed to take credit for helping keep Iraq on the back burner. “Iraq isn’t going anywhere,” he said. “It’s in a fairly weakened state. It’s doing some things we don’t like. We’ll continue to contain it.” Asked a month later by Keller if he had changed his thinking about Iraq, Powell said had not.

But there are also indications that, even then, Powell had a sense of where events were heading and was, true to form, prepared to hold his nose and make himself useful. One source tells the *Prospect* that in the fall of 2001, Powell asked State Department officials for ideas on devising an inspections regime for Iraq that Hussein would reject as overly intrusive. The State Department was obviously not going to administer any future inspections, but because the United States held most of the intelligence about Iraq’s alleged weapons programs, it was in a position to significantly influence the form any future inspections might take. Powell’s request was thus

not an idle one, nor was it seen as an innocent one; in fact, it apparently met with some internal resistance and was not pursued further. (Powell declined to be interviewed for this article, and, despite repeated requests, the State Department never made a spokesperson available to the *Prospect*.)

Eight months later, of course, Iraq was off the back burner. Powell continued to voice reservations. When Brent Scowcroft, who served as national-security adviser in the first Bush administration, wrote an

op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* in August 2002 warning that an invasion of Iraq would be a costly diversion from the war on terrorism and could destabilize the Middle East, Powell called his former colleague to thank him. Likewise, one senior official on Capitol Hill says that when Powell told him that Bush had agreed to work through the United Nations to confront Iraq, Powell commented: “We get in there, we start negotiations. So we don’t go to war; how bad can that be?”

Through September and October of 2002, Powell marshaled support for a UN resolution setting out strict guidelines for new weapons inspections in Iraq and promising harsh penalties if Baghdad failed to cooperate. After weeks of haggling, Powell finally got France to go along, and Resolution 1441 was approved by the Security Council 15 to 0 on November 8. Inspections, led by Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, began a month later. Almost immediately, however, administration officials went out of their way to discredit the process; even Powell expressed skepticism and impatience. And by then, of course, U.S. troops were already pouring into the Persian Gulf region. In late January, Blix and ElBaradei reported to the Security Council that they were getting only limited cooperation from Iraq, at which point the administration concluded it had all the justification it needed for war and decided to push, at Powell’s behest, for a second resolution authorizing force.

According to *The New York Times*’ Todd Purdum, Powell met with Bush in the Oval Office in mid-January and was

**The neocons, for
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told, "We're going to put our case down. I want you to do it. I have confidence in your ability, and people will listen when you speak." Powell was indeed the best face the administration could put forward, and though his February 5 presentation to the Security Council, prepared for him by the vice president's office and the National Security Council staff, failed to win over the French, Germans, or Russians, it clinched the case for war in the minds of many Americans. It has been referred to as Powell's Adlai Stevenson moment. Like Stevenson during the Cuban missile crisis, Powell was seen as the house dove, and because of his perceived dovishness, the words he delivered carried substantial weight.

No sooner did Powell speak than his aides let it be known—Powell and the people around him are masters of the well-timed leak—that prior to his UN appearance, the secretary of state had spent a number of hours at CIA headquarters sifting through the evidence he had been asked to present and had discarded reams of it, frustrated with the inadequate sourcing and selective use of intelligence. Among the discarded portions of the script: the now infamous allegation that Iraq had sought to purchase yellowcake uranium from Niger.

However, it appears that there was only so much cold water Powell was prepared to throw on the war planning. Analysts in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), an internal clearinghouse for classified information, were deeply troubled by many of the claims being made by the White House concerning Iraq's weapons programs (and were ultimately vindicated). As has been widely reported, for instance, it was the INR that debunked the claim that Iraq's attempted procurement of high-strength aluminum tubing was proof of a plan to enrich uranium. After exhaustive research that drew on a number of expert sources, INR officials concluded that the tubes the Iraqis had purchased were incompatible with uranium enrichment.

But despite the expertise available to him in his own building, when Powell went to CIA headquarters, the *Prospect* has learned, he brought no one from the INR—no one with the kind of knowledge that might have steered him away from other questionable claims—and was accompanied only by Lawrence Wilkerson, his chief of staff. INR officials were sent copies of Powell's speech a few days before he went to the UN. Suggestions and corrections, scrawled in the margins, were delivered to Powell while he was at CIA headquarters. Included among the comments: the INR's findings concerning the aluminum tubes. The caution flags, however, were ignored. When the secretary of state addressed the Security Council, he not only included the aluminum-tubes claim but made several other assertions that have since proven to be inaccurate. A performance that looked to be the high point of Powell's illustrious career has now been thoroughly discredited and sits as an indelible stain on his record.

(Carl Ford, who was the assistant secretary of state in charge of the INR during this period, declined to be interviewed. Ford left the State Department last year. He is said to have told colleagues that he was retiring in part because he didn't relish the prospect of having to testify before Congress and share information that might be damaging to Powell.)

Powell's reward for doing the soldierly thing was a slap in the face to his department. On January 20, just after Powell met with Bush and agreed to go before the United Nations, Bush signed National Security Directive No. 24, which gave the Pentagon responsibility for administering postwar Iraq. In retrospect, it was a tragic decision, one that needlessly complicated efforts to stabilize Iraq and that has undoubtedly cost many American soldiers their lives. In the months prior to war, the State Department's Future of Iraq Project, headed by Tom Warrick of the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, conducted an exhaustive inquiry into what would be needed to

stitch Iraq back together. Warrick's group, which ultimately produced a 13-volume, 2,500-page report, outlined a postwar scenario that has proven to be remarkably prescient. Among other things, it warned of a guerilla insurgency following Hussein's downfall, advised against disbanding the Iraqi army, and emphasized the need to restore basic services like water and electricity as quickly as possible to keep Iraqis from souring on the occupation.

All this was ignored. It was ignored because the bureau was viewed by neocons inside and outside the administration as a bastion of Arabist footdraggers committed to preserving the status quo in the Middle East.

It was ignored because the State

Department took a dim view of Ahmed Chalabi, the head of the Iraqi National Congress and darling of Cheney and the neocons, and refused to make him the centerpiece of its post-Hussein planning. And it was ignored because the Future of Iraq Project foretold a long and costly occupation, which Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld didn't want to hear. (They were convinced, based partly on Chalabi's assurances, that U.S. troops would be greeted as liberators and would be able to go home early.)

Initially, the State Department was almost completely frozen out of postwar operations. In March 2003, Rumsfeld pulled aside retired Lieutenant General Jay Garner, who had been tapped to lead the reconstruction effort, and told him that Warrick, then preparing to depart for Baghdad, had to be taken off Garner's team and would not be allowed to go to Iraq. Rumsfeld told Garner that the order "came from such a high level I can't say 'no.'" (It is universally assumed that the order came from Cheney.) And Richard Armitage has told associates that when Wolfowitz visited Baghdad last October—a visit marred by a rocket attack on Wolfowitz's hotel—the State Department was kept in the dark about his itinerary.



Vial Photo: Powell at his now-discredited UN appearance

POWELL'S PROBLEMS IN THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION START at the very top, with Bush himself. Though Powell was never promised the secretary of state's job, his appointment was a foregone conclusion, and his one interview with Bush was short, perfunctory, and pretty much content-free. "It didn't go into depth," says one Powell associate.

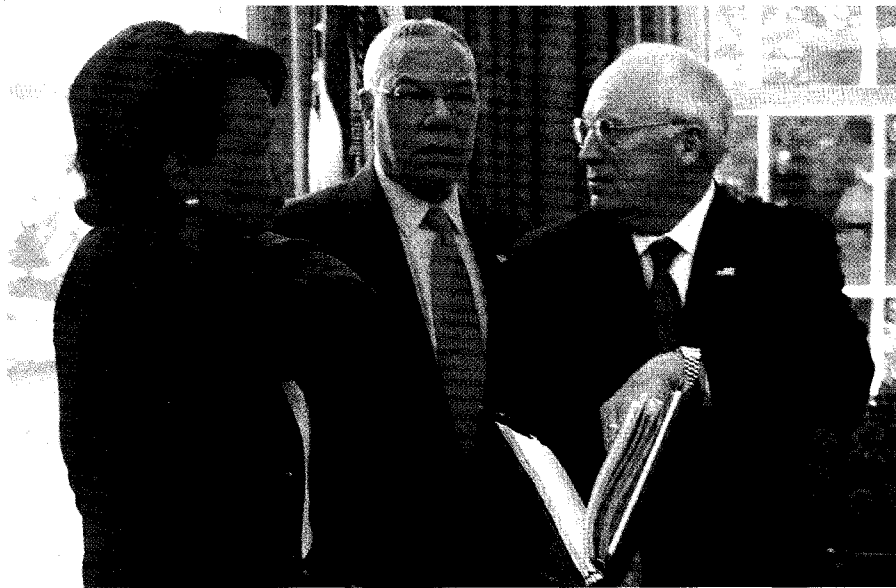
The relationship was built on an unsound foundation in that Powell was far more popular than Bush, and time has not closed the personal divide. One senior official from the first Bush administration says the president "respects Powell and listens to him, but they just don't click." A member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee claims the relationship is actually worse than that, saying: "The president doesn't like him very much. If Powell threatened to resign, the president would say, 'Go to hell.'"

The lack of any real bond has chilled the lines of communication between the two. The North Korea discussion that

as the president's closest foreign-policy aide and forging an almost familial relationship with him. But the gauzy tributes overlook (or ignore) one fairly significant detail: By most accounts, Rice has done a poor job.

She was never going to have an easy time of it. Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Powell all brought enormous stature and experience to the administration; Rice did not, yet she was thrust into a job that required her to serve as their referee and the honest broker among them. She has failed miserably in this role. She is too much of a partisan in policy debates, too eager to tell the president what he wants to hear and for her own views to prevail. As a result, she often fails to present Bush with a full menu of choices. "One thing a good national-security adviser does is make sure the president receives as many views as possible," says one former high-ranking U.S. diplomat. "But we now have a president who is not, on a number of issues, being given a chance to think through all the options."

It seems clear that Powell saw Rice as a potential threat early on. During the presidential transition, Powell held a meeting at his Virginia home to discuss North Korea with several mid-level Clinton administration officials. Rice also attended, flying in from Texas to take part. During the discussion, Powell made clear his support for the Clinton approach: engaging with Pyongyang and proceeding with the 1994 Agreed Framework, in which North Korea had agreed to cease its nuclear-weapons program in exchange for two light-water reactors and fuel-oil shipments. As one participant recalls, Powell completely dominated the session and seemed to go out of his way to cast developments in a positive light. "I had a sense that he did this deliberately, that he stepped out and steered the conver-



Middle Man: Rice hasn't represented Powell's position to Bush; Cheney has often second-guessed him.

took place aboard Air Force One was not an isolated incident: Powell has told friends of multiple meetings with Bush in which he has left believing they were on the same page only to see the president later ignore his advice or do the opposite. "He'll feel that he's gotten his point across and will go back to the State Department and it will all fall apart," says a former colleague.

Occasions for agreement are rare because Powell and Bush simply have very different perspectives on how best to promote the national interest. Surely the most authentic expression of the president's worldview came at Camp David the weekend after 9-11. "At some point," he declared, "we may be the only ones left. That's OK with me. We are America." Powell, by contrast, believes coalitions and alliances are a necessity, not a luxury, and he is known to be deeply uncomfortable with the hegemonic-messianic impulses that have guided Bush's thinking since 9-11.

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice has compounded Powell's troubles. Over the last three years, Rice has been the recipient of mostly glowing press coverage. She is a compelling figure, an African American woman serving

sation in this direction rather than take a chance on where it might go with [Rice]," recalls one participant. "If she disagreed, he didn't give her a chance."

A senior official from the first Bush administration who knows both Rice and Powell well thinks her closeness to the president is the crux of the problem between her and Powell. "The president relies on her a lot, and I think she probably sees her role more as taking care of the president than running the [National Security Council] system," he says. More often than not, he adds, Rice is allied with Cheney and Rumsfeld, and this, combined with Bush's black-and-white perspective and preference for action over talk, has put Powell at a severe disadvantage. Asked if Powell feels that Rice has done an inadequate job of representing his views to Bush, the same official says, "I think Colin probably thinks that on balance that's true."

Rumsfeld, of course, has been a constant irritant for Powell. The two have known each other since the Nixon administration, when Rumsfeld was an economic adviser and Powell a White House fellow. Though they are now of equal rank, Rumsfeld still treats Powell as a subordinate. Rumsfeld

hasn't hesitated to intrude on Powell's turf, either publicly—with his gibe about "old Europe" in the run-up to the Iraq War—or privately. Former State Department officials tell the *Prospect* that Rumsfeld has a habit of sending Powell brusque, often demeaning memos laying out the Pentagon's position on foreign-policy issues and essentially instructing the secretary of state how to go about his job. It is also widely believed that Newt Gingrich's scabrous attacks on the State Department last year—first in a speech to the American Enterprise Institute, later in an article for *Foreign Policy*—were done with the approval of Rumsfeld, to whom the former House speaker is an adviser.

Rumsfeld, however, would not exist but for Cheney, and the vice president, the wizard behind the curtain of this White House, has been the main source of Powell's misery. Bob Woodward has written that Cheney was incensed by the 25-minute acceptance speech Powell gave when Bush announced his nomination as secretary of state, and the relationship has not improved with time. When Powell made his ill-fated attempt at Middle East shuttle diplomacy in April 2002, he was subjected to a barrage of second-guessing back in Washington, most of it emanating from the vice president's office.

Ironically, it was Cheney, who as secretary of defense in the first Bush administration, gave Powell the biggest break of his career, bypassing a number of more senior four-star generals and naming the native New Yorker chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1989. Powell was no stranger to the executive branch; there was his stint in the Nixon White House, and he had gone on to serve in the Reagan administration, first as an aide to Weinberger, later as national-security adviser. During these tours of duty, he had proven himself to be a non-ideologue with a reverential attitude toward power and those who knew how to accumulate and use it. As military historian Eliot Cohen puts it, Powell was "fascinated by government as a game, learned its rules swiftly, and soon mastered it." When it came to core convictions, though, Powell had one: that the country's civilian leadership had failed the military badly during the Vietnam conflict and could never be allowed to do so again.

Cheney, as curt and aloof then as he is now, ran the Defense Department with an iron fist. Nonetheless, Powell managed to find room to maneuver. The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986 had made the chairman of the Joint Chiefs the principal military adviser to both the president and the secretary of defense, entitled to bypass the service chiefs, and Powell took full advantage of these augmented powers. Recognizing that the end of the Cold War would substantially alter U.S. military requirements, Powell took it upon himself to draft a plan for restructuring the armed forces. His diagnostic skills were better than his prescriptive ones: The strategy he came up with, called the "Base Force" plan, was notable chiefly for its timidity: Its main planks consisted of a 25-percent reduction in troops and some consolidation of major commands.

But what Powell lacked in vision he more than made up for in office savvy. He reduced the power and influence of the

service chiefs in ways both symbolic and substantive. For instance, sessions of the joint chiefs took place in his office rather than the "tank," where they were normally held, and staff officers and note taking were both forbidden. Powell also seized control of the flow of information to Cheney. Previously, staff officers had briefed the secretary of defense and his aides on operational issues and other matters; now, Powell himself did all the briefing.

After George Bush Senior's defeat in 1992, Powell remained as Joint Chiefs chairman through nine tumultuous months in the Clinton White House. Two of the biggest issues facing the new administration were gays in the military and the crisis in the Balkans, and in both instances Powell expressed his opinions with a vigor that struck many observers as out of bounds for the president's chief military adviser—verging, even, on insubordination.

As a candidate, Clinton had promised to end the military's ban on homosexuals, and the issue was thrust to the top of the agenda the moment he took office. The brass opposed lifting the ban, and Powell went out of his way to throw obstacles in Clinton's path; it was clear to the White House that he and the other chiefs were prepared to wage a battle royal

on Capitol Hill to prevent the integration of gays into the military. Indeed, nine days before Clinton took office, Powell gave an address at the Naval Academy and urged midshipmen to resign in protest if they felt they couldn't abide the change in policy.

Troubling as that episode was, it paled in comparison to Powell's conduct in the debate over Bosnia. Powell had successfully encouraged the first President Bush not to intervene in the Balkans. During the 1992 campaign, he went public with his opposition, writing an op-ed for *The New York Times* lauding Bush's refusal to commit troops. When Clinton took over, he wanted military options concerning Bosnia; Powell gave him a litany of reasons not to get involved (including inflated troop estimates). "He did not frame the issue in a way that made it possible for the president to do what he wanted," says former Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill "Tony" McPeak, who served under Powell from 1990 to 1993. "Instead, he said, 'Here's Option A, it is really stupid. Here's Option B, it is dumber than dirt.' It wasn't disloyalty, it wasn't because it was a Democratic administration; it was just because it was Powell's view. But when the president asks you to do something, you sit down and figure out how to do it."

Military historian Richard Kohn, who has written extensively and critically of Powell (but thinks his presence in the Bush administration has been a minor blessing), believes that because of Powell's bureaucratic skills, Cheney and others around Bush felt it necessary to tie him up and put him in a box. "They knew the book on Powell and set out to isolate him," Kohn said. Certainly, one reason Rumsfeld was given the Defense Department was to act as a counterweight to Powell and ensure that the former general's influence there was kept in check (Powell had pushed for Tom Ridge). When Wolfowitz, who has a long history of butting heads with Powell, was asked why he took the No. 2

**In the Clinton years,
Powell's behavior
struck some observers
as practically verging
on insubordination.**

spot at the Pentagon, he gave a one-word answer: "Powell."

Then there is John Bolton, the outspoken hard-liner currently serving as undersecretary of state for arms control and international security. He was appointed at Cheney's behest, presumably to serve as the vice president's eyes and ears at the State Department. Powell vehemently opposed Bolton and indicated to members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he hoped to see the nomination killed. That didn't happen, and Bolton has proven to be a highly disruptive presence at Foggy Bottom—needlessly complicating diplomatic efforts with his bombastic rhetoric, bypassing normal State Department procedures, even openly defying Powell. (In 2001, Powell mandated that INR analysts were to take part in staff meetings of all State Department senior policy officials. After complying for a few days, Bolton decided, in the words of one aide, that he wanted to "keep it in the family" and banished his INR liaison, an analyst named Greg Thielmann.)

POWELL'S TENURE AT FOGGY BOTTOM HAS NOT BEEN completely devoid of successes. He negotiated a peaceful, face-saving resolution to the crisis with China over a downed American spy plane in April 2001. He played a key role in back-channel discussions that led to Libya's recent decision to give up its nuclear ambitions and cooperate in the fight against terrorism. He was also instrumental in persuading Bush to dispatch U.S. Marines to Liberia last summer and to earmark more money for Africa's AIDS crisis. And he has proven to be an enormously popular figure within the State Department, giving the embattled institution a much-needed morale boost (by, among other things, surrounding himself with career diplomats rather than political appointees).

But measured against the expectations that greeted his appointment, these are puny achievements. What most troubles people who know Powell is the passivity with which he has endured the many setbacks and slights. For instance, there is no evidence that he protested the decision to put the Pentagon in charge of administering postwar Iraq; no evidence, either, that he tried to intervene when Warrick was barred from going to Baghdad, or that he spoke up when the Pentagon began blocking other State Department appointees to the Coalition Provisional Authority. Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz have repeatedly muscled in on Powell's turf, Bolton has repeatedly subverted his authority. But if Powell has voiced any displeasure to the president, or even to Rice, it is the best-kept secret in Washington. "I don't think he's fighting, and I can't understand why," says one high-ranking official from the first Bush administration.

Actually, there is an explanation for Powell's inaction, and it has little to do with his uniformed past. True, he is a military man, accustomed to falling in line; as Caspar Weinberger once put it, "Colin is essentially a good soldier. He does his duty and carries out orders." Habits formed over a lifetime are hard to break, and Powell's natural inclination is to swallow his differences and salute. Yet it's the fact that those differences are never strongly held that mainly accounts for Powell's inaction.

He has opinions but few, if any, real convictions, and there's no ground he won't cede in the interest of expediency and ambition. Says Richard Kohn, "He's a man with no core of ideology, vision, or principle other than to serve the United States."

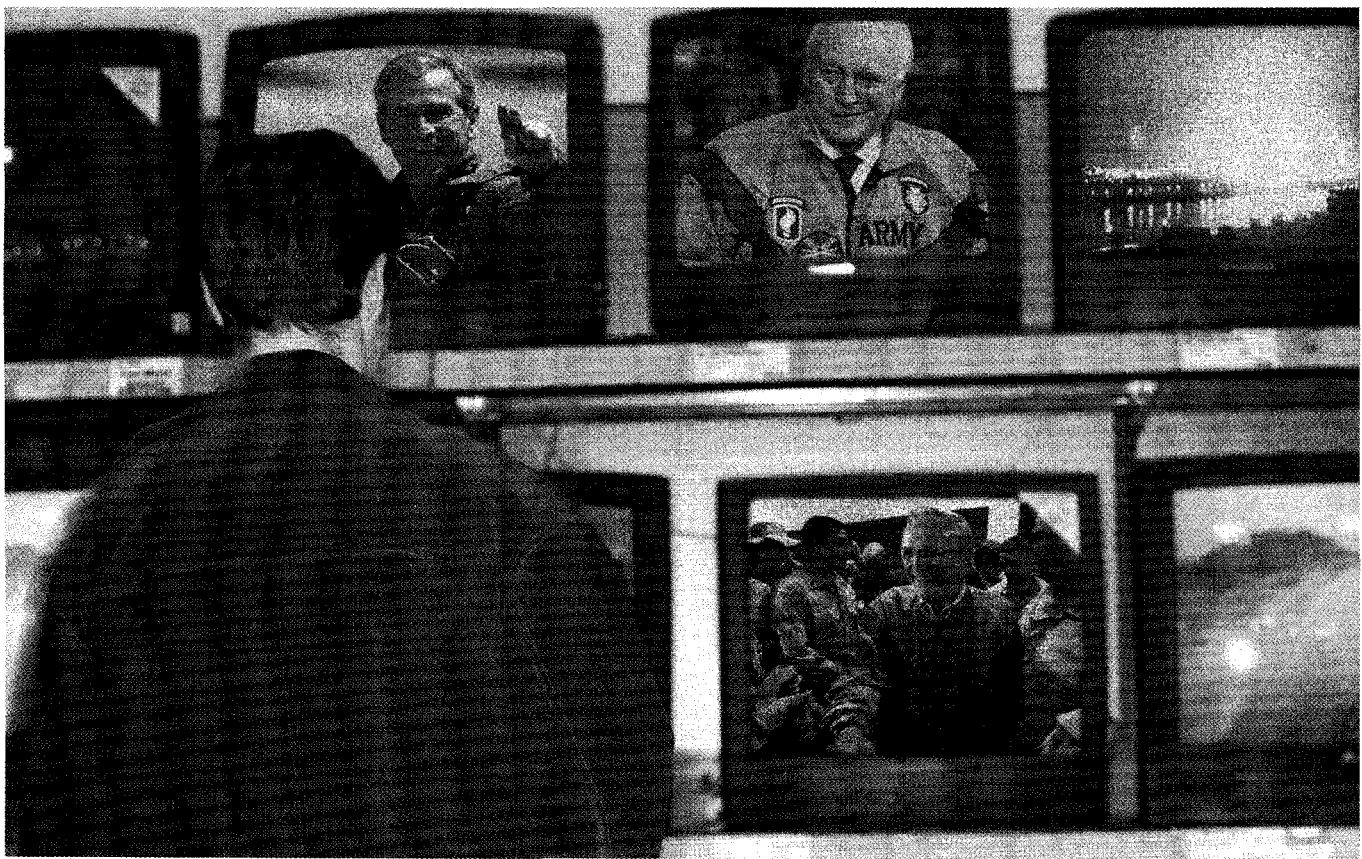
The only times in his career that Powell put up a fight were over gays in the military and over Bosnia. He fought on those because they fed exactly into what has been his one true cause: protecting his beloved Army, from both potential Vietnams and from woolly-eyed civilians generally. But even then, the real story was not so much what he did as what he didn't do. These were cases in which he feared the country's civilian leadership was once again screwing things up for the Army, yet he didn't resign in protest—even as he urged others to do just that. For Powell, even the Powell doctrine proved expendable. The Bush administration has turned the doctrine on its head in Iraq—by waging preemptive war, by using less than overwhelming force, and by placing U.S. troops in a hostile environment with neither a plausible postwar plan nor an exit strategy. That Powell was complicit in this effort says pretty much all there is to say about his attachment to principle.

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If there's a tragedy here, it's one mostly of Powell's making. For all their success in cutting Powell down to size, Cheney and company have not altered one basic fact: Bush needs Powell more than Powell needs him. Powell could have crippled the administration had he quit at any point in the last two years. Given his immense clout, he was in a position to raise important doubts about the administration's course on Iraq. In choosing not to confront Bush with his concerns, he not only failed his president; he failed the country. But even if Powell had spoken up, it's not clear what he could have offered Bush beyond procedural advice and critique. When Bill Keller asked him to describe his worldview back in the fall of 2001, the secretary of state answered with "an articulate and utterly uncontroversial discourse" that Keller aptly described as "uplifting nonpartisan boilerplate." Powell will get you where you want to go, but someone else has to provide the road map.

On the most critical issue confronting the United States, the rise of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, Powell helped Bush implement a course of action conceived by the neocons. What he didn't do—because he couldn't—was propose a different course of action that might have led to the same goal of political reform in the Arab world but that wouldn't have involved waging an unpopular war on a trumped-up pretext, a war that has extracted an enormous cost in American lives and American prestige. Bush, by most accounts, is an impressionable sort—"malleable," as one Bush family friend uncharitably puts it—but selling him on an alternative vision would have required actually having one, which Powell plainly did not. That alternative vision—hardheaded about the dangers facing the U.S. but aware that the war on terrorism can't be won without international cooperation—will have to wait for a Kerry administration. ■

MICHAEL STEINBERGER, a Prospect senior correspondent, writes frequently on foreign policy.



Fear Factor

Our hype-driven culture thrives on confusing reality with fantasy and on making us afraid that we're making the wrong choice. Sounds a lot like the Bush re-election campaign.

BY JAMES SQUIRES AND JANE SMILEY

FOR A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS—THOSE WHO DID NOT vote for George W. Bush the first time—democracy has failed to deliver on its promise that the candidate with the most votes wins. And those who voted for the president—a minority—did not get what they were promised, either. Their candidate, who ran on a platform of plain-truth government, fiscal conservatism, and a safe foreign policy, turned out to be a reckless, aggressive, big-spending president who delivered the largest federal deficit in history and the most controversial war since Vietnam. Now, four years later, it is already clear that the flawed and fraudulent election of 2000 could well be repeated, and perhaps even etched into our politics, permanently altering the character of history's best experiment in self-government.

The one enduring tenet for which American democracy has been known around the world is the faith we place in fair and free elections. But as with other aspects of our image, fairness has always been somewhat of an illusion. Our history is marked

by elections gone awry: Voter fraud in Kansas, certified by slave interests in Congress before the Civil War, inflamed abolitionists and convinced many northerners that the South could not be trusted to uphold American institutions of government. Similar travesties occurred with Chicago Mayor Richard Daley in 1960 and Florida Governor Jeb Bush (and then-Secretary of State Katherine Harris) four years ago.

The 2004 election could be stolen, too, as many of the weaknesses in the 2000 balloting process have gone uncorrected and some reforms, such as touch-screen and other computer-based election machines, have been shown to be unreliable and easily manipulated. But the real threat is not that Democrats or Republicans will steal a critical state again, or that another president will be appointed by the Supreme Court; it is the possibility that fear is being replaced in the political process by fear-mongering, employed in the high-tech world of instant communications by the skilled and unscrupulous mind manipulators of today's advertising culture.

And the integrity of our political process is evaporating as quickly as the moral principles that once set us apart and made us a model for great nations of the world.

Checks and balances were incorporated into our system by the Founding Fathers to protect the nation from the concentration of power in the hands of a single person, group, or institution (because the Founders had seen the abuse that came from a monarchy). James Madison, perhaps the greatest political theorist among them, envisioned a democracy where critical decisions, such as who occupies the White House and whether to go to war, would be made by educated citizens in a thoughtful debate he called the “public voice.” The theory was, ultimately, that a classic, linear reasoning process based on facts—retained from debates and discussions—would yield a consensus. Such a process had produced the great books of world literature, including the Bible, the Torah, and the Koran. It also resulted in generally held value definitions and, in America, the political life that gave us the Marshall Plan and the Civil Rights Act, not to mention other policy achievements that elevated our power and status all over the world.

Yet the grim moment when television took over responsibility from schools and parents for creating educated citizens was the day that the economic foundation of democ-

the screen, ready for their brains to be washed. And no institution in society keeps up with moving targets as well as the American marketing industry.

Members of a well-educated but less hurried society, for example, might reason that a diet of burgers and fries would produce an obese generation short on energy. But watching the thin, young, quick-footed dancers in the “I’m Lovin’ It” McDonald’s campaign produces a different, more enticing, and distorted picture. Thus does emotion overpower reason. Our political choices, unfortunately, now come in the same misleading packages—and are, not unintentionally, aimed at the most vulnerable among us. There is marketplace for our commerce; it is the marketplace of our ideas. No matter how serious the issue, it is now resolved the same way we buy cars and hamburgers.

America is so addicted to hype that it can no longer tell what is true from what is not. In the recent four-hour telecast of the Super Bowl, CBS ran 54 commercials, each costing more than the total annual revenue of the average small business that once constituted American capitalism. Many of these spots were funny. None of them was true. In one, a horse’s flatulence burned the hair off a woman sitting in a sleigh. In another, an ad for a cure to erectile dysfunction implied that the product might produce a four-hour erection

James Madison and his associates could not have anticipated the public voice ever having to compete with “teaser” headlines or sales pitches for impotency cures.

racy—capitalism—became its heart and mind. And, not coincidentally, that may have been the moment when reason and virtue in our political process gave way to dollar signs. Madison and his associates could not have anticipated the public voice ever having to compete with “teaser” headlines—or finding its way to the national agenda only by crawling through sales pitches for impotency cures and low financing rates. Nor, for that matter, could this have been foreseen by Franklin Roosevelt, who as late as World War II could still sit down for a fireside chat and reason with his constituents on the radio. It took nearly half a century for entertainment and advertising to overwhelm the institution of the free press, which used to function as America’s public voice. And it took about the same length of time for the press’s successor in that role—television—to change the process by which the human brain makes decisions.

Recent scientific advances that allow the mapping of brain activity suggest that children who grow up watching television receive and process information differently and more rapidly than their parents who did not. Not unlike muscle development, brain development varies with use, so the more different parts the brain employs, the more efficient it becomes. As a result, the audio-visual communication of information is more efficient when employed by those who have grown up watching television. As more and more people have used audio-visual communication over the years, and as technological sophistication has increased, the structure of capitalism has also changed. When television became the marketplace, people began to gather in front of

that would require medical attention to arrest. During halftime, a preplanned “wardrobe malfunction” resulted in the baring of Janet Jackson’s ample, star-studded breast. And at the end of the game, a team won by just three points.

In that four-hour span, television offered at least three kinds of entertainment: humor, titillation, and athletic competition. And who knows where real ended and unreal began? This is true about television in general, including, sadly, even the news.

When the World Trade Center fell in 2001, it looked like something achieved by moviemakers. From television’s standpoint, this horrendous event was as successful a piece of programming as could be concocted by the best fiction writers. And had the Super Bowl been scripted, the exposing of the scandal would have been just as lucrative as the event itself—perhaps even more so than Jackson’s breast baring. In a culture that elevates stock values above all else, executives are judged only on financial performance, not on how well they educate viewers.

So who cares what is true or not? The public-service mission of the old “free press” has been replaced by the modern media imperative not to bore the audience. Special effects such as those in *The Matrix* movies are so impressive that human capabilities are underwhelming. That hardly anyone who saw *The Matrix* can explain what it’s about says a lot about a marketplace where even technological wonders, like pictures of Mars taken by a robot, cannot compete with hip-hop sex videos.

Virtually all of this exciting communication is mere commerce for the corporate culture and the preserve of a half-

dozen vertically integrated media behemoths. Special effects of *The Matrix* and news images of Mars are brought to you by the same group of people. And like proverbial giant alligators, they sleep wherever and with whomever they want to, answerable to no one for their behavior.

The media giant Viacom, for instance, owns both CBS, which broadcast the Super Bowl, and MTV, the producer of the game's halftime show. No one at either company took responsibility for the Janet Jackson fiasco, which slid all the way downhill to the shoulders of the waning rock star and her barely adult disrober, Justin Timberlake, a skinny kid from Memphis too young to even grow a real beard. And no one was even asked to take the blame for the sleazy commercials—because the one characteristic of the global corporation is the compulsion to close the sale, whether the product is pure gold, equity, or smut.

Historically, the strength of capitalism as an economic underpinning for democracy has been its appeal to the human spirit. Nothing quite satisfies the natural instincts of mankind like achievement and reward. But no individual has ever been as rigid and fanatical about unregulated capitalism as the publicly held corporation. In the last 20 years, buying and selling equity—a form of gambling—has become easier than developing, selling, and servicing a product. But whether marketing widgets, intellectual property, or shares, the selling is accomplished the same way: by creating a favorable impression in the minds of a customer base that has the attention span of a flashbulb.

It is the instant impression, the emotion felt by the receiver of the message, that drives the engine. Television demotes reason and argument to pure irrelevance. Except for C-SPAN, a little-watched cable channel, and some public-television news programming, the public voice now consists of television news and talk radio—two squawk boxes increasingly held to entertainment values and profit expectations by corporations whose allegiance is to monopolization and profit. Once upon a time these corporations were run by people who learned their values the old-fashioned way; now they are run by people for whom television and television values are second nature, who never question priorities or worry about the differences between citizen and consumer. Their only peer pressure comes from fellow profiteers in the world of marketing, where no successful technique of consumer motivation has gone untried or underdeveloped.

And of all the staples of modern television marketing, none is more reliable or often utilized than fear-mongering. Watch a day of commercials and you will see an amazing array of fears being exploited—of being fat, of having the wrong credit card or wireless network or Medicare provider, of drinking beer with no taste, of being unable to control diarrhea or your bladder or your appetite.

With such morally bankrupt commercial entertainment as its forum, political decision making has become a reality

show as ripe for exploitation as bachelors and bachelorettes. Over the years, the presidential-election image makers and media “spinners” have successfully raised public hackles with the specter of all sorts of fearsome election outcomes, both real and imagined: the unpredictability of Barry Goldwater's hand on the nuclear button; the racism of George Wallace; the dovishness of George McGovern; a spineless Jimmy Carter under the thumb of the ayatollah; Michael Dukakis setting free rapists, or even disappearing under his tank-driver helmet; Ross Perot going bonkers in the Oval Office. Fear is easy to recognize and exploit. Even something as serious as the response to the September 11 attacks was orchestrated for grab-'em-by-the-nerve television-audience impact.

The Clinton White House was masterful at manipulating the public mind. Bill Clinton himself was a man of words, full of arguments, beliefs, eloquence, and a desire to appeal to reason. Ronald Reagan was a man of words as well, although many of his best ones were written by Peggy Noonan. Unlike Clinton, though, he was never regarded as intellectual or schol-



arly. Yet he was a man of values formed by linear reasoning. And his rise to political leadership came from his ability to deliver speeches based on principles, not on advertising.

But from the day George W. Bush was created by the Republican Party's right wing as the born-again fundamentalist alternative to an embarrassing Clinton legacy, he has been a nearly perfect advertising image, if a far from perfect president. All presidents spend their first terms running for re-election, but the Bush administration has relied on the principles of advertising unceasingly, almost without recourse to any other mode of communication. And so far that's been its crowning achievement.

Once America was attacked, a president who did not respond quickly and vigorously would have ensured himself only one term in office. So the war in Afghanistan was a no-brainer. Unfortunately, though, retaliation became the emotion that has defined the Bush presidency and has threatened the foundations of our freedom, perhaps more than the acts of the suicide hijackers. Now gearing up for an important election, we are still responding to our own fear-mongering.

The question of whether Saddam Hussein deserved attacking is probably not nearly as important to understanding our future direction as whether the brains around Bush knew what they were doing and why. So far, all the evidence suggests that Iraq was picked as a target for the demon-

stration of our military might and nation-building expertise primarily because Hussein was so villainous that even the Arabs wouldn't mind him being eliminated. What is new about this kind of White House decision making is that, for the first time, American war planners used instant communications as a weapon of war the way they've long been used in politics.

Not surprisingly, they settled on an ad slogan—"shock and awe"—with "fear" as the target emotion, betting that character assassination of those who disagreed with the war and the firepower would spread the right messages at home and abroad. After all, that kind of fear-based strategy had stopped John McCain in South Carolina in 2000, when his heroism was denigrated and his stability questioned. In fear-based decision making, alliances, standards of conduct, and, indeed, common sense go out the window. Whether the opponent is a congressional candidate or an international terrorist, the idea is shoot him before he shoots you. You'd think people who know so much about guns would understand the problem with hair triggers.

Once a war—or an election—is over, however, such victors don't seem to have a clue what to do. Arrogance and stupidity are self-defeating, eventually. Massive firepower and feelings of omnipotence aside, those quick to war, perhaps responding to their own advertising, have been feebly unable to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. That the illusion of our goodness was lost on the liberated and that some Americans now want a return to reason has left them shocked, if not awed. True, the people of Iraq have been freed from Hussein's prison of tyranny, but America appears hopelessly imprisoned in Hussein's land, caught in the disparity between advertised illusion and chaotic reality.

At least half of all Americans still believe that the Iraq War was a good idea and that somehow the Iraqi dictator had weapons of mass destruction and something to do with past and future terrorist attacks. Yet the evidence needed to support such conclusions remains as difficult to find as Osama bin Laden or the truth in a Super Bowl commercial. Whatever reason the Bush administration had for doing what it did, if such a reason exists, has been hopelessly lost in the fear-mongering and drum roll of patriotism. Yes, we have established in the public mind the image of a sincere and involved president rallying his country after an attack. But few TV-educated voters can be counted on to discuss intelligently and coherently the implications of the Bush doctrine of pre-emption—a radical departure from a bipartisan principle of American foreign policy that had distinguished the United States as a benevolent world citizen.

The notion that we use our might only in our defense was once a cornerstone in our culture. Even in the moral wasteland of television, Marshal Dillon never drew first. Yet the moment that Bush Junior's bombers took flight over the Persian Gulf and tanks began to roll toward Baghdad, this country opened a new chapter in world history. In retrospect, we may realize that it was the final step in the destruction of our finest and most important image, a bold and scary departure in America's foreign policy. Most disturbing, it was a change of immense magnitude made without meaningful debate, shrouded in a catchy advertising slogan, and launched by

professional public-relations spinners in a cloud of fear via the miracle of modern communications. And alas, but perhaps not surprisingly, Saddam Hussein did not turn out to be as fearsome as advertised.

Undoubtedly, the best we can expect is more of the same; the questions before the American electorate will sadly be couched in the vernacular of the modern advertising culture. Which should America fear the more, the president we have or the one who might replace him? The competing images are already set in place. In their primaries, the Democrats have already spent hundreds of millions of dollars, much of it attempting to set in the American mind an image to fear—that of an incompetent and intellectually incurious president, aloof from the economic concerns of the average person, beholden to the rich special interests and fundamentalist right-wing Christians, recklessly mortgaging the country's future.

And far earlier in the contest than usual, the incumbent's election machinery has already defined its most salable issue: in this case, "national security," aka fear of changing commanders in chief in the middle of war. We are being sold a "wartime president," leading his country not only in the war against Muslim terrorists but also against cultural enemies like gay married couples and other godless liberals of the left. And being a wartime president means never having to explain record budget and trade deficits, or why exporting jobs is good for both corporate America and displaced workers in New Hampshire and Ohio.

Repeated terrorist alerts, new assessments of reinvigorated bin Laden minions, and resumption of the culture war leave little time for dull, irrelevant economic and social truth. So the Republican strategists' idea of the perfect presidential debate would be an image face-off: a doctored photograph of the probable-Democratic nominee, Senator John Kerry, attending an anti-war rally with Jane Fonda, in contrast to two 15-second film clips of the wartime president, one with him in a flight jacket aboard an aircraft carrier and the other of him leading "NASCAR dads" in prayer at the Daytona 500. The Democratic strategist, of course, prefers another juxtaposition of images: that of young war hero Kerry in combat gear moving through a Vietnam jungle while, to the sound of car-bomb explosions, a smirking Bush challenges terrorists to "bring it on" in Baghdad.

Of course, none of these images approaches the whole truth, which remains as elusive in our system and among our leaders as nobility and statesmanship. But in election 2004, they might be the closest the democracy can come to substantive debate in our current climate of fear. And this is why, back in another time, when images were slower and truth easier to find, an unquestionably great wartime president warned us that of all our enemies, the most real and dangerous is fear itself. ■

JAMES SQUIRES *covered politics for The (Nashville) Tennessean and the Chicago Tribune, and was editor of the Tribune from 1981–90. He is the author of Read All About It: The Corporate Takeover of America's Newspapers and Secrets of the Hopewell Box. JANE SMILEY is the author of many novels and several nonfiction books. Her novel about the 1980s, Good Faith, is coming out in paperback in May.*



The Wrong Target

The newly created intelligence commission is supposed to find out how we blew it so badly on Iraq. It wants to focus on the spooks, but the real culprits here are the pols.

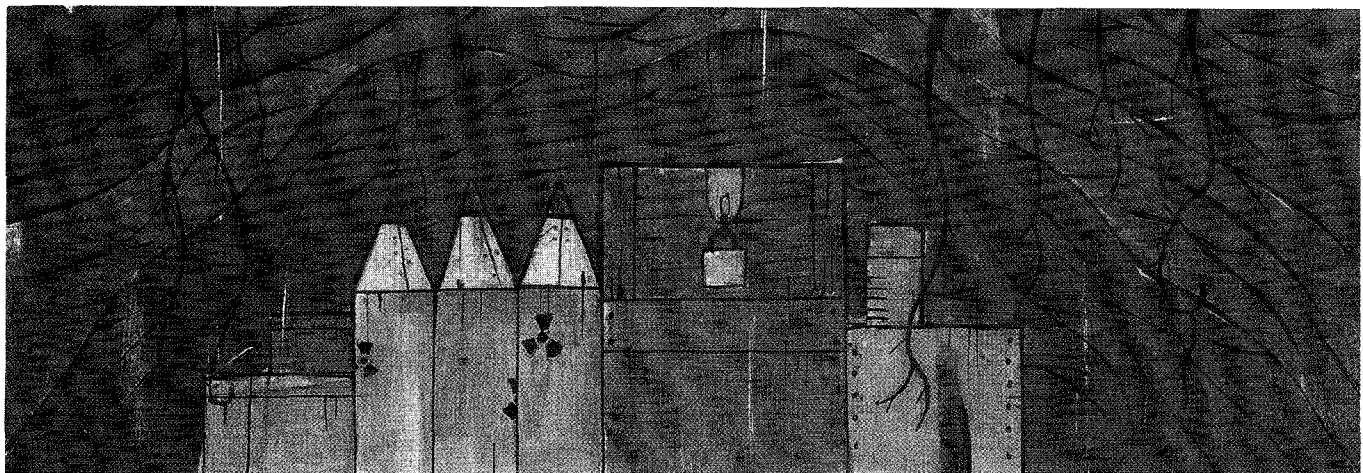
BY JASON VEST ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEVON BOWMAN

ON FEBRUARY 5, 2003, AS U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE COLIN Powell tried to convince the United Nations Security Council of the need for war against Iraq, in a quiet Baghdad neighborhood half a world away, Mahdi Obeidi watched Al-Jazeera intently as Powell's presentation unfolded.

Once tasked with designing and building a centrifuge to enrich uranium for use in Iraq's nuclear-weapons program, Obeidi had spent most of the past decade tracking budget numbers as the state Military Industrial Commission's director of projects—a position that put the scientist in the unique position of knowing the line-item details of every on-going Iraqi weapons endeavor. Though the nuclear knowl-

edge he had gained in '80s-era clandestine missions all over the world made him one of Saddam Hussein's most important scientists, this was a special status he could have done without: He and his family were under constant surveillance because of his refusal to join the Baath Party.

According to selections from a soon-to-be-published memoir by Obeidi that were obtained by the *Prospect*, as well as interviews with personnel involved in Obeidi's recent defection and debriefings, the only place he and his family felt safely out of electronic earshot was behind the house, in Obeidi's exquisite garden. Yet to Obeidi, even that picturesque setting had a sinister quality. To him it was less a gar-



den than a horticultural map of Iraq's covert nuclear-weapons program: The mature lime tree in one corner was originally a sapling from Holland, where Obeidi had gone to filch technical information on uranium enrichment; the berry vines snaking through lattice had come from India, site of another 1980s-era nuclear-espionage endeavor.

And, buried under his lote tree—a tree that in the Koran represents the border between knowledge that can and cannot be ascertained—were the components of the centrifuge, consigned to the earth on Hussein's orders in 1991 as United Nations sanctions and weapons inspections began.

All the manifest reminders of deception and destruction, according to Obeidi's memoir, left him "eager for [the Americans] to come and topple [Hussein]." But he also "knew ... better than most" that "the American pretext [of Hussein's possessing weapons of mass destruction] was false." As he sat on the edge of his sofa that February evening listening to Powell on Al-Jazeera, he was "stunned" when he heard Powell unequivocally state that Iraq still had an active program to enrich uranium. "The only successful Iraqi method of enriching uranium to bomb grade had been the centrifuge, and I was the only person on earth who knew every detail of the program," he writes. "[Hussein] simply couldn't have begun it anew without my participation, or at least my knowledge."

As the secretary of state went on to make his case, Obeidi noted that Powell did not repeat President Bush's assertion from a week earlier that Iraq had tried to procure low-grade uranium from Africa, a claim Obeidi considered virtually impossible. The points Powell did make left Obeidi vexed. One was that a new factory was being built to produce magnets for the centrifuge motors. "[T]hese motors have many uses, from refineries and other industrial plants to rockets and missiles," he recalled. "One thing I knew for sure is that the magnets weren't intended for a centrifuge."

Next was Powell's assertion that a consignment of high-grade aluminum tubes had a "dual-use" purpose—i.e., they could be used either as material for military rockets or in a uranium-enriching centrifuge program. On the latter point, "The idea was so fundamentally flawed it was almost ludicrous," Obeidi writes. "[T]he specifications of the tubes were so unlike anything we'd worked with before that using them would require us to start almost from scratch. ... [T]he diameter of the aluminum tubes was about half the diameter of the tubes we had used throughout our centrifuge program. ... [It] also would have required retooling every aspect of our program and basically starting again from square one."

If, that is, a centrifuge program were indeed still active. But as Obeidi could attest, the sanctions and inspections regime had been effective, ensuring that the centrifuge's key components, schematics, and other documents stayed buried under his tree. "What does it mean," he writes in recounting

his discussion with his family after Powell's speech, "when the mightiest nation in the world spends so many resources on a fairly simple investigation and still cannot arrive at the truth? If they are genuine about seeking the truth, why is it so impossible for them to find it? ... If they wage war in Iraq and conquer the country, the truth will come out in the end. They will find this truth, and then they will be measured by it. If they say they believe there is a centrifuge program in Iraq, they must be genuine in their belief. The question is: How have they arrived at the wrong conclusion?"

OBEIDI—WHO, ALONG WITH HIS FAMILY, IS MAKING THE transition from temporary CIA protective custody to normal U.S. residency—isn't the only one asking that question. Yet the answer is not necessarily easy to divine. In part, the Iraq weapons-of-mass-destruction debacle has to be understood in the context of a decades-old battle between two camps in both policy and intelligence circles. One—prominent among

Bush administration political appointees—hews to a "capabilities-based" reading of intelligence (that is, a potential enemy's possession of weapons is considered tantamount to his using them). The other—more often found in career circles—embraces an "intentions-based" approach, which puts at least equal emphasis on political, economic, sociological, and psychological factors as on capabilities. The conflict between these two camps hampers the intelligence community's ability to do its job and is at least partly responsible for how the United States "ar-

rived at the wrong conclusion" about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. But at the heart of the matter is the fact that the entire National Foreign Intelligence Program—as the U.S. intelligence community is formally known—is in need of a long-recommended reconstitution.

Over the past decade, there has been no shortage of studies on how to reform the intelligence community in the service of at least minimizing "intelligence failures." Some of those studies have hardly been revolutionary; others have been better at diagnosing problems than coming up with mechanisms for reform. But the best of them—including 1992's effort by the then-House and Senate Intelligence Committee Chairmen David Boren and Dave McCurdy, both Democrats, and, most recently, the 2001 Brent Scowcroft-chaired presidential commission on intelligence—have concluded that the only hope for American intelligence is to reorganize it completely, a view that at least a significant minority of intelligence professionals echo. But rather than heeding the advice of these experts, the Bush administration has been assertively intransigent.

As it stands now, the person many think of only as the CIA director has, in fact, two roles: director of the Central Intelligence Agency and director of central intelligence. In theory, the director of central intelligence has ultimate authority over every U.S. intelligence agency, including the three with



What a Drag: A Jordanian man watches Powell's UN presentation.

the largest budgets—the National Security Agency (NSA, signals intelligence), the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO, the spy-satellite maintainers), and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA, the eyes in the sky). Budget control over those three agencies, however, lies not with the director of central intelligence but with the Pentagon—whose own intelligence agencies, the Defense Intelligence Agency and the individual armed services' agencies, exist primarily to gather tactical intelligence for military operations.

All these different missions, agencies, budgets, and authorities don't always make for the best possible intelligence community. While recent years have seen improvements in management, the fact that there is no one true leader remains problematic. CIA official Larry Kindsvater noted in a recent *Studies in Intelligence* article, at a time when "managerial and organizational emphasis in the [intelligence community] should be on national security missions and issues. Today's [intelligence community], however, is organized by a collection of 'stovepipes'" that think of themselves more as specialized collection agencies than as parts of a whole acting in concert.

The Boren-McCurdy and Scowcroft recommendations aimed to fix that. Somewhat oversimplified, they boil down to this: Let the CIA director be the CIA director only, managing an agency devoted solely to human intelligence (the recruiting and running of spies). Create a new position, the director of national intelligence, which would have ultimate leadership and budgetary control over all the intelligence agencies. Pull the NSA, the NRO, and NIMA out of the Defense Department and, along with elements of the CIA's science and technical directorate, create a new agency that would put all of the non-human intelligence under one roof. Furthermore, pull the CIA's analysis arm, the Directorate of Intelligence, out of the CIA and make it a separate agency under the director of national intelligence. (An alternative proposal by Kindsvater calls for a similar reorganization of the community around intelligence "centers" dedicated to specific issues—terrorism, say—or regions.) The proposals would also let the military's intelligence agencies stay under service control, but focused on order-of-battle-related intelligence.

The Bush administration and Congress, however, have been working to reinforce the status quo, giving Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld the tools to expand the Pentagon's intelligence bureaucracy and operations. While Rumsfeld's appointment of Stephen Cambone as the new undersecretary of defense for intelligence may help bring some order to the chaos of military intelligence, it also ensures that the Pentagon will hold tight to the three big-budget agencies that give it real power. It also, especially in the current atmosphere, means that the Pentagon may use its intelligence apparatus for operations and the creation of finished intelligence products more driven by politics than actual information.

In the wake of ex-Iraq Survey Group chief David Kay's congressional testimony revealing an apparent absence of weapons of mass destruction, the White House has appointed former Democratic Senator Chuck Robb and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Laurence Silberman to head yet another in-

telligence commission (at least the 21st in 50-plus years), in this case to study "intelligence failures" on Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. This may, in fact, be a misplaced mandate, because the real key to understanding the Iraq debacle is not how intelligence failed but how, behind every intelligence failure, there is a policy failure. In this case, the policy failure is not just the administration's resistance to meaningful intelligence reform; it's also the policy of preemption and its cousin regime change. And the reality is that neither the CIA nor any neocon/Iraqi National Congress (INC) operation could have delivered enough definitive evidence to support a policy of preemptive war against Iraq.

IN RECENT YEARS I'VE SPOKEN WITH VETERAN OFFICERS and analysts from U.S. and U.S.-allied civilian and military intelligence services, including some who worked both with the Iraqis in the 1980s and against them more recently. All of them have noted—and approvingly echoed—the call for a greater emphasis on "human intelligence." Yet they also hold that lacking human intelligence from Iraqi sources—a uni-

versally agreed upon shortcoming in the recent debacle—has to be understood in the context of U.S. intelligence history with Iraq.

As James Lilley, a CIA veteran, former U.S. ambassador to China, and scholar at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, told an intelligence-reform commission in 1996, intelligence networks don't just "appear out of the ground; you have to know what you're doing and go after it," sometimes spending years to cultivate only a few agents and often spending days on planning

**At best, the CIA ran
only very limited
operations out of its
station in Baghdad
after the mid-1980s.**

what might be the briefest of encounters between case officer and agent. This can be dicey even in reasonably friendly countries, and virtually impossible in "denied areas," enclaves bereft of an American presence that would allow CIA officers to operate undercover. "Hard-target country" is the term used to describe a nation where the challenges to conducting human-intelligence operations are exceptionally high. Until 1984, when Washington and Baghdad established full diplomatic relations, Iraq was effectively a denied area, and after 1984 it was most definitely a hard target. At best the CIA ran only very limited operations out of its station there. "It was a tough place, one of the toughest," a former CIA division head says. "In many respects, operating behind the Iron Curtain was easier."

But, then, there wasn't much of a priority on actually operating in Iraq, given U.S. policy at the time. "We really didn't attempt to run any human ops there against the Iraqis," recalls a veteran intelligence officer who liaised with the Iraqis in the 1980s, citing the Reagan administration's paramount policy goal: to support the Iraqis so they could continue to fight the Iranians. (Of secondary interest was the Reagan administration's desire to undermine Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, an endeavor in which Baghdad participated by funding anti-Qaddafi groups.) Indeed, the intelligence-sharing relationship was considered so important that, as one old hand puts it, "[I]n other places in the world, if we wanted to get a terrorist, we'd try to kidnap him; in Iraq, we had someone try

to convince the Iraqis to voluntarily hand one over.”

Another reason for forgoing intelligence in Iraq was Saddam Hussein’s brutality. According to the account of an Australian intelligence officer, whatever Anglo-American human-intelligence efforts there were in Iraq effectively ended in the mid-1980s, after the British MI6 station chief and his deputy were pulled off a Baghdad street one night and taken to a warehouse on the outskirts of town. “They had arrayed before them the various agents they had been running,” the officer told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s *Four Corners* in 1994. “There were wires hanging from the rafters in the warehouse. All the men were strung up by wires around their testicles and they were killed in front of the faces of their foreign operators.”

So leading up to the Gulf War, U.S. policy had not made a priority of human-intelligence operations against Iraq. (This was underscored not only by the CIA’s failure to predict the invasion of Kuwait but by its inability to get a handful of its own intelligence officers out of Baghdad after the invasion began. Their rescue was undertaken by the Polish intelligence service, which was only able to pull off the extraction based on cover provided by a large Polish industrial project in Baghdad.) As a result, there were scarce agent networks to be tapped when U.S. policy turned against Hussein.

After the Gulf War, the CIA did set up shop in no-fly zones and Kurdish areas and, with dissident Iraqi groups, did debrief some former Iraqi military and intelligence officials. But as Andrew and Patrick Cockburn chronicled in their 1999 work, *Out of the Ashes: The Resurrection of Saddam Hussein*, a mix of regional political instabilities, infighting among Iraqi dissident groups and CIA divisions, and Hussein’s ruthless Mukhabarat, or secret police, undermined everything from useful human-intelligence collection to coordinated coup attempts. By the late ’90s, non-no-fly-zone Iraq had truly become a denied area once again, with the only on-the-ground intelligence-gathering opportunities coming via UN inspection teams. While CIA personnel were on those teams, they weren’t able to recruit and run spies. “We did have sheep-dipped people on the teams,” says a retired CIA official whose responsibilities included Iraq at the time, “but only people with the right science and tech knowledge who knew what to look for and how to look for it, which was a far cry from actually running human ops, which would have put the UN missions in too much risk.” And when the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) team was kicked out of Iraq in 1999 after it was discovered that U.S. intelligence had decided to run its own mission under UNSCOM cover but without UNSCOM’s knowledge, U.S. access ended entirely.

This left analysts with a disappointing lack of solid intelligence and, outside of signal intercepts, a reliance on dated intelligence gleaned from the brief defections of Hussein’s sons-in-law. When seriously pressed by the current Bush administration in the run-up to war, analysts extrapolated from incomplete and dated information, which in some cases led them to starkly different conclusions. In late 2002, a CIA officer told me that an analysts’ meeting on one aspect of

weapons of mass destruction had, like others, ended the same way: with no consensus. “One-third believe [Hussein] has the stuff,” he said at the time. “One-third don’t. One-third, probably the most responsible, say you simply can’t say for sure, which is hardly surprising with what there is to work with.”

BUT IF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WASN’T GIVING the White House what it needed to attack Iraq, someone else was. Ahmad Chalabi and members of his Iraqi National Congress had long asserted that they had networks and human intelligence that no one else had, especially about Iraq’s weapons-of-mass-destruction programs and ties to al-Qaeda. Many in the intelligence community—in particular the CIA and the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research—had long held serious doubts about the reliability of INC intelligence, as well as related intelligence analysis produced by the Pentagon’s highly ideological and very low-profile Office of Special Plans. The Pentagon, however, made it policy to exalt whatever “intelligence” came from Chalabi. Not only did Chalabi regularly visit with

Pentagon officials in the months leading up to war, bearing ostensibly useful information, the Pentagon also oversaw the INC’s Intelligence Collection Program and ordered the Defense Intelligence Agency to debrief “defectors” produced by the INC.

Yet as a 2003 *Los Angeles Times* investigation found, not only were the defectors few in number (three), their “intelligence” on weapons of mass destruction was found to be either fraudulent or impossible to corroborate (and has not, as yet, panned out). In

the months after Baghdad fell, Chalabi has bizarrely dissembled about the INC’s intelligence on al-Qaeda, and what was done with it. In one breath on *Frontline* he asserted that the INC had a “document” now in “U.S. hands” showing “visits of al-Qaeda” to Baghdad and “money that changed hands” between Hussein’s lieutenants and al-Qaeda, and added that the INC would share with the show its copy of the document retained by the INC’s own “intelligence people.” As the program pointedly noted, “After repeated requests, *Frontline* has still not seen the document.”

Several months later, Chalabi gave *60 Minutes* the document—a 1992 Iraqi memo that makes passing mention of Osama bin Laden—which *60 Minutes* subsequently asked the Defense Intelligence Agency about. According to Lesley Stahl, the agency said it was “of little significance,” as “it doesn’t spell out what the relationship with Osama bin Laden was, or what he did, if anything, for the Iraqis.”

That dubious or discredited intelligence products from the INC and the Office of Special Plans ended up being used by Vice President Dick Cheney and others to make the administration’s case for war—without, as a chagrined George Tenet noted in Senate testimony on March 9, the CIA’s knowledge or endorsement—is, according to intelligence veterans interviewed for this article, the crux of the matter and the principal issue that the Robb-Silberman commission should investigate. “I personally would like to see a full disclosure of the INC’s sources and methods, who their ‘intelligence’ went

**After Baghdad fell,
Ahmad Chalabi made
bizarre statements
about intelligence
on al-Qaeda.**

to in the administration, and how it was processed and analyzed and conveyed by and to those outside the CIA,” says a former intelligence official who has long cast a jaundiced eye on the INC. Since the war ended, the Defense Intelligence Agency authored a report—noted in a September 29, 2003, *New York Times* story—that concluded that of the information provided by the handful of INC-managed defectors, “no more than one-third of the information was potentially useful, and efforts to explore those leads since have generally failed to pan out.”

According to the *Times*, the report also noted that several of the Chalabi-introduced defectors “invented or exaggerated their credentials as people with direct knowledge of the Iraqi government and its suspected unconventional weapons program,” and raised the rather obvious possibility that some of the defectors might have been unknowing dupes as part of an Iraqi counterintelligence operation, or possibly even double agents. In mid-2002, and despite the weaknesses of the INC’s intelligence, Cheney held an unprecedented meeting with CIA analysts. According to sources with direct knowledge of that meeting, the principal thrust of the vice president’s visit was to get the analysts to give more credence to intelligence provided by the INC.

Yet even before that meeting, the administration’s policy needs were affecting the CIA’s read on Iraqi intelligence. This is especially clear when comparing the CIA’s mid-to-late ’90s reports on global weapons-of-mass-destruction threats with more recent offerings. As *Newsday*’s Knut Royce noted last year, the agency’s 1997–2000 reports devote little space to Iraq as a serious potential or imminent weapons-of-mass-destruction threat, particularly with regard to nuclear weapons. The 2001 and 2002 reports, however, suddenly see the introduction of phrases like “reconstituted nuclear weapons program” and “attempting to acquire materials”—despite the lack of intelligence access in Iraq—and the removal of key caveats from earlier reports like “generally successful enforcement of the UN arms embargo” and “do not have any direct evidence.”

As the distinguished intelligence scholar John Prados has noted, these changes seem to indicate a CIA that “until about 1998 was fairly comfortable with its assessments on Iraq, but ... gradually buckled under the weight of pressures to adopt alarmist views.” The October 2002 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq’s weapons-of-mass-destruction programs (a hastily thrown together synthesis of intelligence-community assessments) and Tenet’s October 7, 2002, letter to Congress that dealt with Iraq’s weapons-of-mass-destruction capabilities and alleged ties to al-Qaeda were so deftly written that anyone on either side of the issue could use them to buttress their arguments. But even though the unclassified version of the estimate is alarmist on Hussein’s capabilities, according to sources who have had read the classified annexes, “[P]arts of it were so heavily qualified and footnoted that you would

be hard-pressed to say it comes anywhere near affirming the notion that stuff was there. It essentially says, ‘Here’s what we know and what we don’t know,’ and anyone who read it would conclude they didn’t know a heck of a lot.”

Yet by its own troubling admission—recall here the notion of policy failure behind intelligence failure—the administration didn’t read the fine print. A July 20, 2003, *Washington Post* story described a “senior administration official” who briefed reporters that “neither [the president] nor national security adviser Condoleezza Rice read the [National Intelligence Estimate] in its entirety. ‘They did not read footnotes in a 90-page document,’ said the official, referring to the ‘Annex’ that contained the State Department’s dissent.”

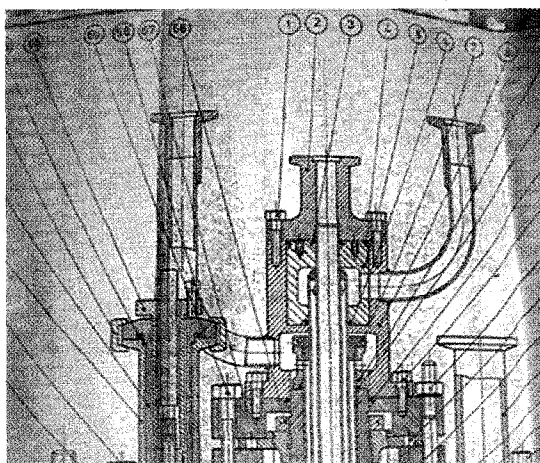
According to a veteran CIA officer with White House experience, this shouldn’t come as a surprise. “We could embarrass just about every president to the point they’d be run out of office if we declassified the President’s Daily Brief and then everyone saw what we told them versus what they actually did,” he sighs. But in this case, he opines, what’s more disturbing—and worthy of focus—is why the most crucial document in the march to war wasn’t even read in full by the president.

At least one confidant of Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz’s was unabashed about the real agenda. At a friendly March 2003 brunch with several journalists, Wolfowitz’s adjunct minced no words: “Everyone knows this isn’t about weapons of mass destruction but about regime change.” Everyone inside the Beltway, perhaps. But, as a senior intelligence official

generally sympathetic to the administration told me late last year, after September 11, it was easier to build a case for war around weapons of mass destruction and links to al-Qaeda. “You certainly could have made strong cases that regime change was a logical part of the war on terrorism, given Baghdad’s historic terror ties,” he said. “But that didn’t have enough resonance. You needed something that inspired fear.”

If the Robb-Silberman commission discharges its duties properly, it will likely come to the conclusion that the weapons-of-mass-destruction snipe hunt was the result of a collision among members of an inadequately reformed intelligence community, the myopia of a political leadership hell-bent on realizing its muscular vision, and the reality that, despite whatever mystique may be attached to “intelligence,” certain unavoidable factors will always limit what can truly and fully be known. But even if it does, meaningful change is unlikely. Taking stock of what we know so far in this case, one is hard-pressed to conclude that the administration has much interest in reforming the structure and process—and is only too enamored of imposing illusions. ■

JASON VEST is a Prospect senior correspondent and a contributor to *The Nation* and *The Village Voice*. To read his additional reporting on this subject, go to www.prospect.org.



It's Da Bomb: Schematic of an upper centrifuge from Obeidi

Kerry's Women

Mary Beth Cahill is just the best known of four women calling the shots for Team Kerry (a presidential-level first). They guided his primary comeback; now comes the hard part.

BY GARANCE FRANKE-RUTA

WHEN THE OLD BOY'S CLUB KICKED INTO GEAR IN EAST Los Angeles in 1998, Mary Beth Cahill, then executive director of Emily's List, took action. Nine-term Representative Esteban Edward Torres announced he was retiring from his seat in a safe Democratic district just two days before the filing deadline for candidates. The heir apparent to his spot was none other than his chief of staff, Jamie Casso, who also happened to be married to his daughter. By retiring so late, Torres was making it hard for any other challenger to jump into the fray.

But where others saw a problem, Cahill saw an opportunity. Grace Napolitano, a state assembly member, former Norwalk mayor, and mother of five, was also interested in running. She was underfinanced, though, and had neither a campaign team nor a strategy on such short notice. So Emily's List, the political action committee for pro-choice women, swung into action. The group had already sent its fund-raising mailer, listing candidates it backed for that election cycle, to a printer. But Cahill stopped the production and made sure that Napolitano's name was added. Emily's List helped Napolitano pull together the team and the plan she'd need to fight for the seat, and the group became her single largest donor, giving her \$20,600 over the course of the election cycle and helping to steer a total of \$49,362 her way in donations from women. It made the critical difference, and Napolitano won her primary—by 618 votes.

"What Mary Beth was so good at here was looking at a Democratic primary field and being able to see a winner," says Joe Solmonese, chief of staff at Emily's List and a close colleague of Cahill's during her tenure there from 1993 to 1998. Emily's List also helped Democratic Representatives Juanita Millender-McDonald of California and Diana DeGette of Colorado win in 1996, and California's Zoe Lofgren in 1994. "Those are great examples of tough primary fights where Mary Beth Cahill looked at those races and said, 'She's going to be the nominee and we have to help her get there,'" says Solmonese. "I think that Mary Beth's great strength is her ability to look at the same situation that everyone else is looking at and to see it in a different way."

In November 2003, Cahill looked at John Kerry's struggling campaign and saw something others didn't. Outflanked by former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, the Massachusetts senator was trailing in all the polls, including a staggering 30-point gap in his neighboring state of New Hampshire, the very men-

tion of which still makes Cahill grimace and shake her head. Fund raising was at a standstill. Political professionals and pundits across the country had written Kerry off, and *The New Republic*, which wrote five editorials arguing the case for different candidates in its January 19 endorsement issue, couldn't even find a writer to make the case for Kerry.

But when Kerry called Cahill on a Friday night in November and told her he was planning to make some changes in his campaign and wanted her to come onboard, she didn't hesitate. "I always thought Kerry was going to be the nominee, which was a cause of derision among my family and friends," says Cahill, sitting in her corner office at the campaign's new headquarters just two blocks from the White House. A white orchid bloom jauntily curves over her desk, and outside her office door junior staffers scarf up cookies in a welcome basket from the nearby St. Regis Hotel. "There was a clear reason John Kerry"—he is always "John Kerry," never "Kerry" or "John"—"was the front-runner early last year. ... That kind of got lost in the fog for a while, but he still had all of these strengths as a person, as a candidate, as a possible nominee, and they just needed to come back to the fore."

After Kerry called, Cahill talked to her husband, lobbyist Steve Champlin, and her employer, Senator Ted Kennedy, for whom she'd spent two years as chief of staff. They gave the endeavor their blessings; on Monday, she was the new Kerry campaign manager.

"When she told me she was going to work for John Kerry, I said, 'Really?' and she said, 'Well, John Kerry is going to be the Democratic nominee,'" recalls Solmonese. "Most people might have said, 'Mary Beth, I think you're crazy,' but I said 'Gee, that's exciting, John Kerry is going to be the nominee,' because I've been down this road a lot with her. And I had actually supported John Kerry and given John Kerry money, so I said, 'Gee, that's nice to know, because now I think it might actually happen.'"

CAHILL, 49, IS ONE OF THE FIRST GENERATION OF FEMALE political consultants. The eldest of six children from a large, politically active Irish Catholic family in Framingham, Massachusetts, Cahill imbibed politics at the dinner table as something that was a part of everyday life. After graduating from Boston's Catholic liberal arts school Emmanuel College, which at the time admitted only women, she began her



Real Soldiers: Cahill helps Kerry go over his victory speech the night of the February 10 primaries.

political career in 1976 as a receptionist and caseworker in the Boston office of a politician whom a youthful John Kerry briefly considered running against—Jesuit priest and former Representative Robert Drinan.

Representative Barney Frank has known Cahill since she helped elect him to office as Drinan's successor in 1980. "Every month you just gave her more responsibility because she was so good," recalls Frank. "In the '80s, when we had even more sex discrimination than we have today, she was one of the most highly regarded political professionals. Smart. Firm without being belligerent. Decisive. Relatively calm in moments of stress. Not just smart, but a very good presence—people liked being with her."

Yet by the mid-'80s, Cahill was still one of the best-kept secrets in Boston politics, working as the personnel director for Governor Michael Dukakis. After leaving Frank, Cahill also worked for Representative Ed Markey and former Boston Mayor Ray Flynn before trying her hand at bigger races in the late '80s and early '90s. In 1986 she orchestrated the come-from-behind victory of incumbent Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy against a phenomenally popular challenger, four-term Governor Richard Snelling, and in 1990, managed Senator Claiborne Pell's hotly contested final race in Rhode Island.

At Emily's List, Cahill helped elect some of the most important new southern Democrats, Senators Mary Landrieu of Louisiana and Arkansas' Blanche Lincoln, then went to the Clinton White House for a two-year stint as director of the office of public liaison. After this, Cahill eschewed the revolving door's promise of a lucrative private-sector job and returned to the Boston fold as Kennedy's chief of staff.

"I think it's pretty telling for John Kerry," says Karen White, Cahill's successor at Emily's List. "Of the major Democratic candidates, John Kerry had the only woman running his race. She's only the third to do so." The first woman to run a presidential general-election campaign was Susan

Estrich for Dukakis in 1988; the second was Donna Brazile, who managed Al Gore's campaign after Gore parted ways with his first manager in October 1999. (In an example of just how insular the world of political consulting is—and of the limits to female solidarity—Estrich actually fired Brazile from the Dukakis campaign in 1988, after Brazile publicly suggested that George Bush Senior was having an extramarital romance.) Brazile's tenure as Gore's manager had rocky moments, thanks to her penchant for making controversial public statements, and she developed a reputation for being more of a talking head and big-picture strategist than a detail-oriented manager.

Cahill, in contrast, has avoided publicity and has done little traveling with her candidate. Instead, she has stayed in the Washington campaign headquarters, located until mid-March in a packed-to-the-rafters four-story townhouse on Capitol Hill, and quietly developed a reputation as a pragmatic, decisive manager who keeps things flowing smoothly, puts the right people in the right positions, and lets the staffers do their jobs. She is a woman so relentlessly practical and down to earth that when she gardens, one of her few forms of relaxation, she grows the herbs and vegetables and leaves the tending of flowers to her husband.

Cahill's influence on the Kerry campaign was discernable immediately, in ways both large and small. Kerry began to sport a new, shorter haircut (which Cahill insists she had nothing to do with) and stopped hopping on motorcycles at campaign appearances while wearing penny loafers. At Cahill's urging, the campaign did more to emphasize the candidate's war-hero past. Kerry debuted a new, tougher stump speech at the Iowa Jefferson-Jackson dinner on November 15. A staff that had been riven by arguments on strategy—and fights between the Washington office, led by Jordan, and Kerry's longtime Boston associates—began to gel under her leadership. Cahill's implacable belief in her candidate began

to radiate out from the campaign as a new confidence; press releases and letters to supporters developed a new tightness and fierceness to them. Cahill removed Kerry from direct involvement in the daily back and forth of the campaign's decision-making processes and created a firm structure that freed him up to be the candidate, and only the candidate. "We discuss a strategy, decide on it, and then we execute," says Cahill. The velocity of the primary cycle was such that revisiting decisions after the fact—instead of enacting them—could mean the difference between winning and losing.

Most important of all, though, Cahill decided that the campaign had to focus on beating Dean in Iowa if Kerry was ever going to recover in New Hampshire. To outsiders, it seemed like a huge gamble. But to Cahill, it was the only way forward. "We always thought that the path to New Hampshire lay through Iowa," says Cahill. "We had to convincingly win Iowa." And to do that, the campaign needed more money than it was able to raise on its own. Kerry was going to have to dip into his personal fortune, mortgaging his half of his Louisburg Square mansion to give the campaign a \$6.4 million loan. He spent so much time in Iowa that, by the time the caucuses rolled around, he'd racked up more days there than any other candidate. He didn't advertise in states that voted in February, nor did he visit them.

In a campaign that had been divided between Boston and

starting that Monday morning. "If that was going to be the contested ground," says Cahill, "we were going to win it."

Yet as Kerry made history with one of the most stunning political turnarounds in presidential politics, another historical first passed with little note. Not only was the Kerry campaign the only one of the eight Democratic teams with a male candidate to have a female campaign manager, he is now also the first major-party nominee in presidential history to have a female campaign manager, press secretary, policy director, and campaign chair. "You really know the glass ceiling has been shattered when John Kerry replaces his press secretary and campaign manager in the same day and appoints two women and nobody says anything," says Ann Lewis, national chair of the Democratic National Committee's Women's Vote Center (and Barney Frank's sister).

Besides Cahill and Cutter, there is former New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen, the chair of Kerry's campaign since September 23 and a candidate Cahill backed while at Emily's List. Kerry's policy director, Sarah Bianchi, 31, is a five-year veteran of the Clinton White House, where she worked for Bruce Reed on the Domestic Policy Council and later served as the Gore campaign's deputy director for policy. She then spent the next three years working for the Democratic Leadership Council, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, and—of course—with Kennedy as a Senate staffer.

"I don't think John Kerry needs a Karl Rove," Cahill insists. "This is very much a collaborative process, where everybody brings their talents ... It's not one person."

Washington camps, Cahill finally gave the Bostonians their due, calling on longtime associates and individuals who had known Kerry for decades. Boston-raised whiz Michael Whouley, Gore's Iowa field director, was called in to take over the Iowa operation, and Stephanie Cutter, Kennedy's former press secretary, was drafted as Kerry's new spokeswoman. Cahill also brought on Michael Meehan, Kerry's 1996 Senate press secretary, to work with the media, and Chad Clanton, the Michigan press secretary for Gore in 2000, to do rapid response to attacks from other candidates. After Iowa, Cahill quickly scooped up Dick Gephardt's former chief of staff, Steve Elmendorf, a friend of hers from their time working for congressional leaders, and former Gephardt press secretary Kim Molstre.

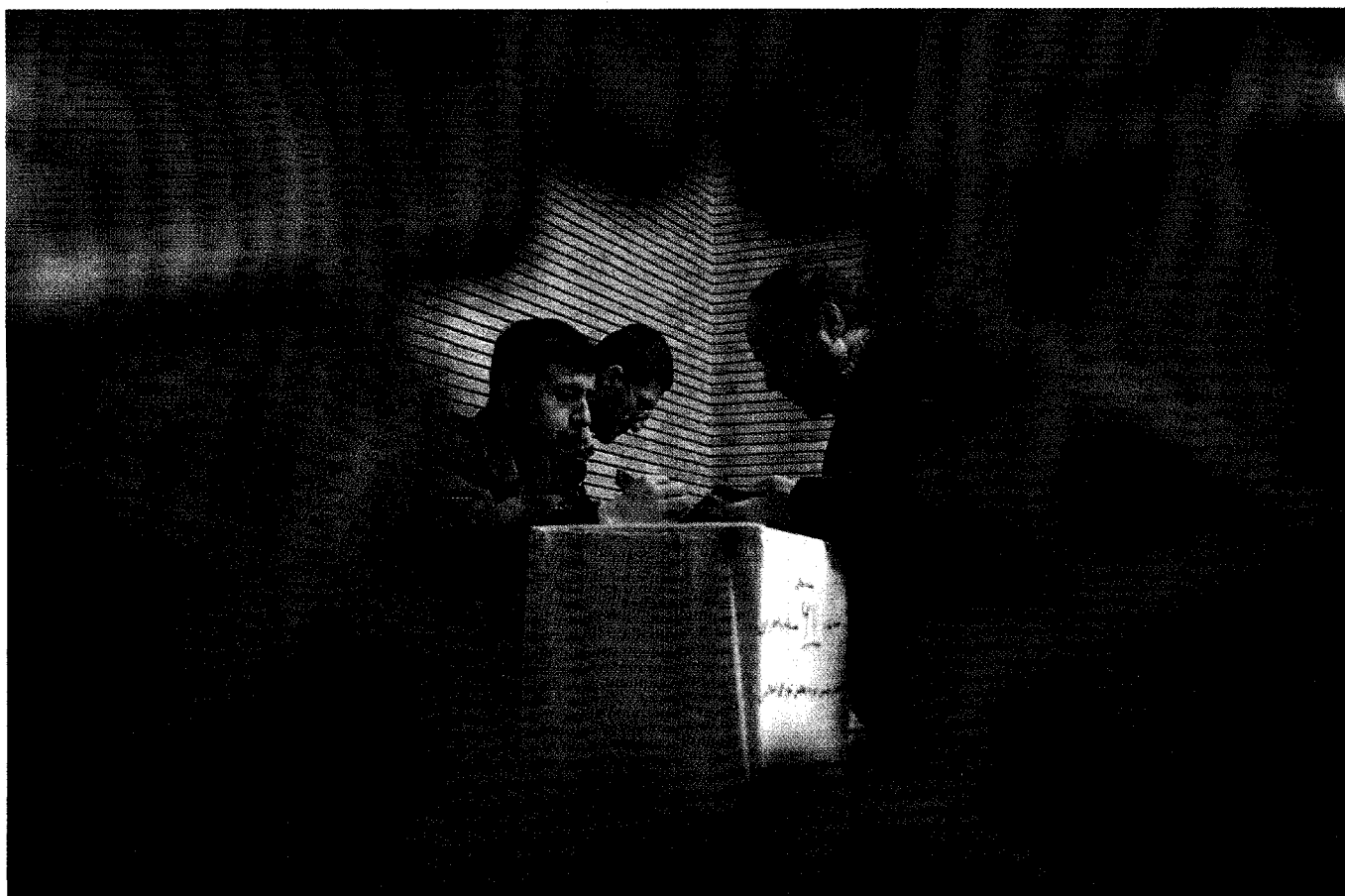
Through it all, Cahill steered clear of the limelight. While Dean campaign manager Joe Trippi regaled reporters with stories and spin at the Hotel Fort Des Moines' Chequers Lounge until 2 a.m. the weekend before the caucuses, Cahill was nowhere to be seen. Dean's troops wore highly visible orange hats, while Kerry's team whitewashed its picture windows so staffers couldn't be seen from the street.

The campaign continued to fight hard right through Super Tuesday. When John Edwards put up \$270,000 worth of television ads in Ohio and Georgia, the two most hotly contested of the 10 Super Tuesday states, the Friday before the vote, the Kerry campaign could have let it pass, knowing that wins in the eight other states were assured. But the Kerry team responded by buying \$1.5 million in the same media markets

AS STEEP A CLIMB AS THE NOMINATION BATTLE WAS, THOUGH, it will be little compared with the challenges facing Kerry in the months ahead. After the long pre-primary battle, Kerry's major competitor, Dean, collapsed so quickly—and his other main competitor, Edwards, chose to run so mild a campaign—that Kerry emerged from the primary season largely unscathed, and also a little bit untested. Even rank-and-file Democrats know little about him, surveys show, and George W. Bush's fund-raising advantage at the end of the primary season was an astonishing 100 to 1.

Now, as Bush takes on Kerry early and aggressively, Cahill finds herself going toe to toe with the awesomely ruthless Karl Rove and his minions in a battle to define Kerry first. Is she up to the task of being the Democratic counterpart to Rove? "I don't think John Kerry needs a Karl Rove," Cahill insists. "This is very much a collaborative process, where everybody brings their very different talents ... It's not one person."

That said, Cahill is expecting that Bush's weak showing in the early spring polls was only a temporary state of affairs. "He'll get it back," she says with quiet certainty. "He has a lot of money. There is an enormous Republican echo chamber on the president that reverberates with his message. And they'll do almost anything to win." The battle will be hard fought in a "50-50 electorate," she says, "and I think that we will be relentless and we will be strong and we will be prepared for what's coming at us. And you know John Kerry welcomes this fight, any time." ■



Ballot Pox: The February 20 Iranian elections were a blow to Khatami's reform drive.

Handle With Care

Iraq we've invaded. North Korea we won't. That leaves Iran, where most people are eager for change—but not the kind that current U.S. policy would deliver. Here's a smarter way.

BY STEPHEN KINZER

"YOU DID A GREAT THING!"

With that unexpected greeting from an Iranian diplomat in New York last December, my trip to Iran began to take shape. A few months earlier I had published a book that tells how, in 1953, the CIA deposed Iran's last democratic leader, Mohammed Mossadegh, and set his country on a path toward dictatorship and tragedy. Because my book honors Mossadegh, who was a secular liberal and who detested fundamentalism, I hardly expected any representative of the current Iranian regime, especially one who would rule on my visa application, to praise it.

I soon realized, however, that this government official is one of the many Iranians dedicated to the ideals of reform and reconciliation with the West, especially the United States. Most Iranians I had spoken with on previous visits share these views. They are frustrated by their lack of freedom and their country's isolation in the world. In whatever

ways they can, they are pressing for social and political change.

A couple of years earlier, while in the process of researching my book, I had had enormous trouble getting into Iran. Now, suddenly, everything seemed to have changed. The difference could only be that I had published my book resurrecting the figure of Mossadegh. Iran does not observe international copyright conventions, and my book was quickly pirated, translated into Persian, and put on sale in Iran. Readers, especially Iranian readers, might take it as a story of how much Iran was poised to achieve under democratic rule—and how much it lost by falling under royal and then religious tyranny. For better or worse, I became associated with Mossadegh's view that democracy is the best form of government for Iran. Today's Iranian reformers also believe that, and their enthusiasm undoubtedly was behind the warm praise with which this Iranian diplomat

received my visa application at the end of 2003.

Iran, however, has two governments. One is a functioning democracy, complete with elections, a feisty press, and a cadre of reformist politicians. The other is a narrow-minded clique of mullahs that has lost touch with the masses and sometimes seems to have no agenda other than closing newspapers and blocking democratic change. These governments vie for power every day. Outsiders may be forgiven for seeing Iran as a country that can never make up its mind. Should it punish the prison guards who beat a photographer to death last year, or promote them? Should it cooperate with foreigners who want to monitor its nuclear program, or defy them? Should it allow reformers to run for parliament, or ban them? Iranian officials seem to contradict themselves endlessly on these and countless other questions, changing their positions from one day to the next. Behind that apparent indecision is a constant struggle between the old guard and the democratic insurgents. One group is dominant for a while, then the other surges back.

As the time for my January trip to Iran approached, I began contacting people there to arrange interviews. Among them were powerful figures in the religious regime, some of whom seemed alarmed to learn that a journalist who had written favorably about Mossadegh was being allowed into the country. A few hours before I was to leave, I received a

In response to the crisis, Khatami issued statements questioning the Council of Guardians, but refused to challenge it or to criticize Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's unelected "supreme leader." That has been a huge disappointment to voters, who elected Khatami in a landslide in 1997 and then again in 2001. Unable or unwilling to fulfill the nation's reformist hopes, he has gone from the role of national savior to the butt of crude jokes. One of them tells of a woman who has been married for years but is still a virgin. When asked how this is possible, she replies: "My husband is President Khatami. He keeps saying 'I'll do it, I'll do it,' but he never does it."

Because politicians have been so unsuccessful in challenging the clerical regime, many Iranians have lost faith not only in them but in the entire political process. Deprived of the chance to vote for candidates of their choice, they stay away from the polls in droves. Their frustration is quite different from the fatalistic lassitude that has shrouded much of the rest of the Middle East for centuries. Iranians are a highly cultured, educated people with a rich history who trace their lineage to the Persian Emperor Cyrus, author of what is sometimes described as history's first human-rights declaration. (Shirin Ebadi, the Iranian lawyer who won the 2003 Nobel Peace Prize, introduced herself in Oslo as "a descendent of Cyrus the Great, the very emperor who pro-

One Iranian joke tells of a woman married for years but still a virgin. The punch line:

"My husband is President Khatami. He keeps saying 'I'll do it,' but he never does it."

startling message from the Iranian diplomatic mission in New York: Stay home or risk arrest at the Tehran airport.

I will probably never know what led to this sudden change in the regime's attitude toward me, but I have a theory: Probably I was caught in the same power struggle that envelops all of Iranian public life. Those who promoted my trip and obtained my visa so quickly did so because they hoped I would help propagate their ideals in Iran. Their conservative rivals also suspected I would do that, and when they learned I was coming, they stepped in to cancel my trip.

WHAT HAPPENED IN IRAN AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR, when I was supposed to be there, reflected the same ideological tug-of-war that made Iranian officials unable to decide on such a small matter as my visa. A full-fledged political crisis erupted as the parliament, which represents Iranian democracy, clashed with the shadowy Council of Guardians, the voice of reaction and fundamentalism. The council issued an order disqualifying nearly half of the 8,200 candidates who wished to run for seats in parliament. Among them were more than 80 of the 290 incumbents, including no less symbolic a figure than President Mohammed Khatami's brother. That order triggered a 26-day protest sit-in, a round of recriminations, and, in the end, an election that turned out badly for everyone. Reformers lost most of their seats, including that of Speaker Mehdi Karubi. Conservatives lost much of what little democratic credibility they had left. But the clearest losers of all were the Iranian people. For now, at least, the option of change through the ballot box is closed to them.

claimed at the pinnacle of power 2,500 years ago that he 'would not reign over the people if they did not wish it.'")

For more than a century, Iranians have painstakingly been making their way toward democracy. Iran has the human and natural resources to be at least as successful as regional powers like Mexico, Turkey, and Malaysia, but its people suffer under a regime whose failures have given them both an undemocratic political system and plagues of unemployment, corruption, drug abuse, child prostitution, and other forms of social decay. Many find escape in a burgeoning subculture that revolves around the Internet, satellite television, and other subversive tools, but they shy away from political action because no cause or leader captures their imagination.

This year's confrontation over who should be allowed to run for parliament was widely covered in the Western press. Some officials in Washington eagerly interpreted it as a sign of the regime's impending collapse. In Iran, however, it was no big deal. Friends of mine there, whom I heard from by e-mail after my trip was canceled, were unanimous in their disgust.

"The sit-in sounds more serious outside the country," a journalist wrote. "Most people see it as a political show by reformers to attract people's support. I highly doubt that they would have been able to get elected even if they were allowed to run. Many say that they were cheated when they voted for the reformers, and that reformers are deeply faithful to the system." A student in his mid-20s was just as pessimistic. "The reformers have missed golden opportunities since the presidential election in 1997," he lamented. "Now they want to compensate, but it is so late. People ignore

them. We know the conservatives are the worst alternative, but the reformists are a bad one. We are looking for new faces, but there is no one."

IF SO MANY PEOPLE IN IRAN ARE SO UNHAPPY WITH their government, why don't they rise up and overthrow it? During my last visit there, 18 months ago, I put this question to various people. All gave me the same answer. One university professor put it most succinctly. "We all banded together to overthrow the shah in 1979, everyone from communists to Mossadegh liberals to religious fanatics," he told me. "We were able to work together because we all agreed on one thing: Nothing could be worse than the shah. But what happened? We got something worse. We learned a terrible lesson. You don't want to go out onto the streets and start the wheel of revolution rolling. You never know where it will lead. It's better to be patient and unhappy than risk another catastrophe."

Iranians fervently wish for change, but not through revolution. Nor, despite the fantasies of some in Washington, would they welcome foreign intervention. Such intervention, in fact, would probably be the only thing that would bring many of them to support the regime they loathe. After all, the country's bitter history has led many Iranians to consider foreign intervention the greatest evil that could befall them. The British robbed them of their oil wealth during the first half of the 20th century, British and American agents organized the coup that crushed their democracy in 1953, and Americans propped up Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi for 25 years.

Early in the Bush administration, some policy planners seriously considered the possibility of sending troops to overthrow the Iranian government. "Everyone wants to go to Baghdad. Real men want to go to Tehran," a British official working with the Bush team said ominously in mid-2002. If the American soldiers who invaded Iraq had been greeted with garlands of flowers instead of guerrilla resistance, those "real men" might well have sent them on. Some militants still argue for it. David Frum and Richard Perle, now that they have cut their official ties with the White House and are free to express views that their friends in the Bush administration may still hold, assert in their new book *An End to Evil* that the Iranian regime "must go." [See Karl Meyer, "Return to Empire," page 54.] They urge the United States to crush it "with no more compunction than a police sharpshooter feels when he downs a hostage-taker."

History warns against that course. The U.S.-sponsored coup of 1953 led to decades of upheaval in Iran. It turned the country toward tyranny and led to the rise of a regime that has used every tactic at its disposal, including terrorism, to undermine American interests in the world. Public opinion in Iran is strongly in favor of democratic reform, and that

reform will come, albeit not nearly as quickly as most Americans would like. Intervention would not only turn a new generation against the United States but also end Iran's fitful progress back toward the democracy it lost after the CIA coup of 1953.

There will not be any invasion of Iran this year. Nor, unfortunately, is there likely to be any advance in Iranian-American relations. Part of the reason is that foreign-policy circles in Washington and Tehran mirror one another. One group in each capital favors reconciliation, and they have been in sporadic contact with each other over the years, including during the Bush administration. Their efforts, however, are repeatedly sabotaged by hard-liners in both capitals, who have spent years in confrontation mode.

Iran is not a closed garrison state like North Korea, and its clerical regime is not a self-destructive dictatorship like



American Graffiti: In the wake of the 1953 coup, the Shah ordered anti-U.S. slogans erased from public view.

Saddam Hussein's. Its leaders, including the dour mullahs, are eminently rational, and they now appear more willing to listen to proposals from Washington than at any time since they seized power in 1979. Despite President Khatami's evident failures, he has shifted the center of political gravity in Iran. Political and social ideas are more freely debated there now than at any time in half a century. Women must still wear veils, but vigilantes no longer brutalize those who show their hair, wear makeup, or talk to men in public. This year, for the first time in 25 years, British artists will show their work at a Tehran museum and American archeologists will work at sites in the Iranian desert. The government has invited members of the U.S. Congress to visit.

The Bush administration has been unable to decide how to respond to these overtures. Some officials apparently believe that the United States should not engage with Iran simply because it makes no sense to negotiate with a regime one wishes to destroy (or at least hopes will soon collapse). That is foolish, as engagement is the best tool the West has to encourage change in Iran. There are, however, several good reasons for caution.

Officials in Washington are rightly concerned about Iran's nuclear aspirations, and rightly dubious that Iran will keep its promise not to produce nuclear weapons. Seen from the Iranian perspective, the nuclear project makes perfect sense. Israel, the only country in the region that is truly Iran's enemy, has nuclear weapons. So does the United States, which has troops on both Iran's western border (in Iraq) and its eastern border (in Afghanistan), and whose president has famously designated Iran as part of the world's "axis of evil." One certain way for Iran to deter an attack from either of these hostile powers would be to do what India, Pakistan, and North Korea have done: develop nuclear weapons. Only if the United States stops threatening Iran, and instead accepts some arrangement that offers it a place in a new Middle Eastern security structure, can it be seriously expected to curb its nuclear ambitions.

The administration is also put off by Iran's atrocious record of sponsoring terrorism around the world. Iranian agents, acting with the support of at least some factions in the regime, have assassinated dissident exiles in various European capitals, launched attacks on American military bases, and even, according to several intelligence agencies, planned the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, that took 85 lives. The regime may have pulled back from this murderous course of late, but it

What would make a sensible U.S. policy toward Iran? First, the United States should accept the reality of the Islamic revolution and commit itself to a peaceful resolution of differences between the two countries. Iran is in a period of transition, and it is in everyone's interest to allow this process to proceed. The overwhelming majority of Iranians want peaceful change; the United States should embrace their cause.

Second, in approaching Iran, American officials should bear in mind that this is a country where rhetoric is unusually important. For a combination of historical, cultural, and religious reasons, Iranians feel a deep-seated need to be approached respectfully. American leaders can and should make clear that their interest is in reaching out to help the Iranian people, not the ruling clerics. If they take an accusing or commanding or imperious tone, however, they cannot expect a good response.

Third, the United States should recognize that change in Iran will have to come from within. Iranians will reject any faction that Washington endorses, especially if it is based outside the country. For more than a century, resistance to foreign intervention has shaped Iranian politics. It is folly to believe that Iranians are any more likely to accept intervention now than they were in the past.

Finally, American leaders should approach Iran together with allies, especially the European Union. One of the few

"Military confrontation would be wrong unless it's forced on us, because the Iranians would all rally to their government," says GOP Senator Richard Shelby.

must offer credible assurances to that effect if it expects serious dialogue with Washington. It still supports groups that militantly oppose the current Middle East peace process, yet even that seems open to negotiation. Khatami recently asserted that if Palestinians were offered a deal they wished to accept, Iran would not "impose [its] views on others or stand in their way." Resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute is an absolute prerequisite to stability in the Middle East, and although Iran has been no friend of the peace process, its very militancy could make it a uniquely valuable force if it could be enticed to moderate its position.

Many leading Democrats agree that engagement with Iran would bring better results than confrontation but are afraid of being labeled as softies. John Kerry's national-security adviser, Rand Beers, said in a recent speech that Kerry favors "a realistic sitting down, and having the kinds of discussions that we're just not having because this administration is so tied in its own ideological views of Iran and waiting for the Iranian regime to collapse." To cover his flank, he added: "John Kerry is not saying that he is looking for better relations with Iran. He is looking for a dialogue with Iran."

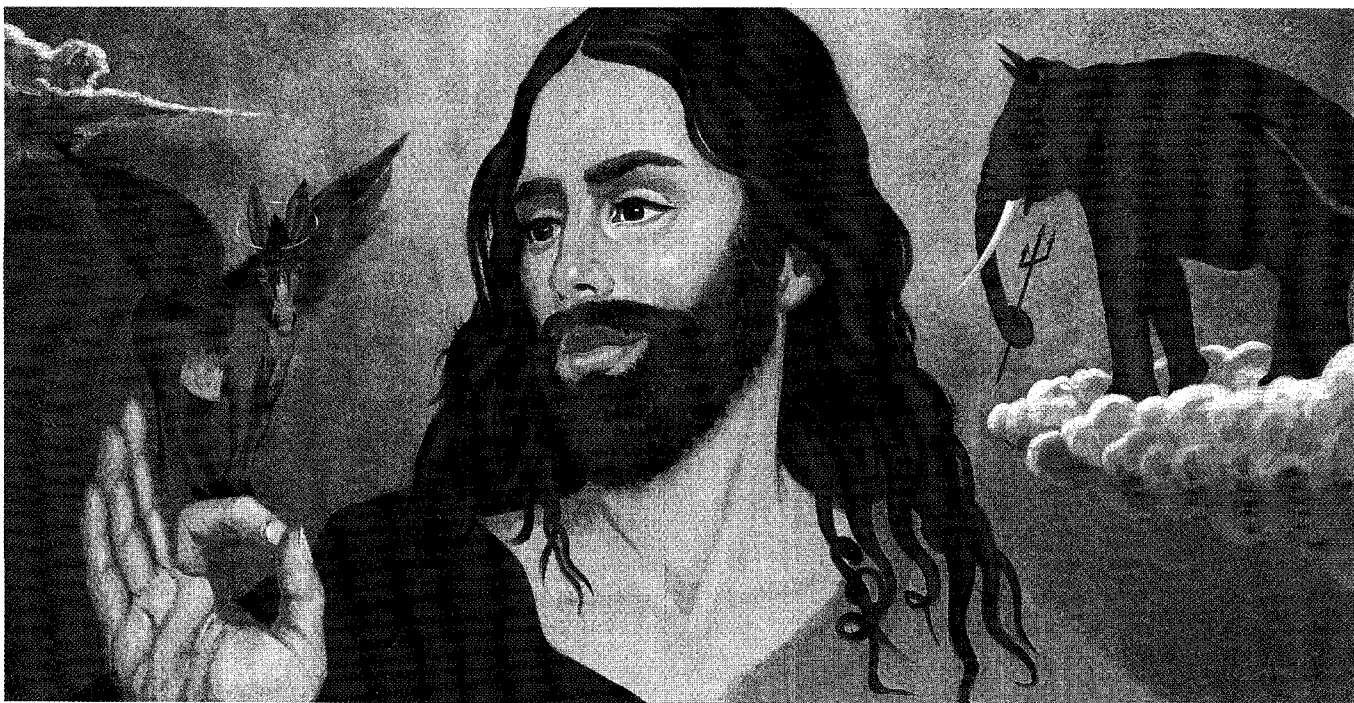
So are some influential Republicans. "Engagement is the right policy, even though it's very difficult to do at times," Senator Richard Shelby, former chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, told me recently. "Military confrontation would be wrong unless it's forced on us, because the Iranians would all rally to their government. We should be looking for ways to do business with them, and then wait for the profound changes that I think are coming."

recent successes the Iranian regime can claim has been the repairing of its ties with Europe. Iranian leaders know that they must strengthen those ties if they are to improve their economy and emerge from political isolation. European officials brokered last year's deal between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Iran will be especially eager to begin talks with the United States if Europeans are also involved.

To embark on this policy, the United States would have to recognize that Iran is not in a revolutionary or prerevolutionary state, that it is essentially stable despite the continual bickering among political factions, and that its people do not wish for either revolution or foreign intervention. Some powerful figures in the Bush administration, captured by messianic visions and convinced that American power can achieve any goal, refuse to accept these facts and want the United States to intervene in Iran. Only by resisting that temptation can the United States hope to reach a grand bargain that would integrate Iran into a peaceful Middle East. Such a bargain is now at least conceivable. American leaders should pursue it seriously, because détente between Tehran and Washington could help reshape the world's most volatile region.

Restraint, engagement, and the support of allies brought about America's epochal victory in the Cold War. The same formula can work today in Iran. ■

STEPHEN KINZER is a New York Times reporter and author of *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*.



Reaching to the Choir

Think all evangelicals are right-wingers? Don't believe everything you read. Just as many are politically moderate. Can Democrats win their votes? God only knows, it's worth a try.

BY AYLISH MCGARVEY ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID M. BRINLEY

IN EARLY FEBRUARY, *60 MINUTES*' MORLEY SAFER PORTRAYED white evangelical Christians as the carnies of American Protestantism. Nine million viewers tuned in and saw shots of vast "megachurch" congregations swaying hypnotically and raising their hands in song. Tacky cinematic renderings of a fiery Armageddon added some dramatic tension. The slick ringmaster of these goings-on, of course, was the Reverend Tim LaHaye, the famous apocalyptic entrepreneur and co-author of the wildly popular *Left Behind* novels. (The series depicts the end of the world as prophesized in the Book of Revelation.)

Safer eventually turned his attention to Washington, where he declared that "evangelical ... beliefs have already reshaped American politics." As the visages of George W. Bush, Tom DeLay, and John Ashcroft flitted across the screen, the message was clear: The Republican Party has God on its side.

Except that this year, a considerable group of evangelicals just might swing the vote—in favor of the *Democrats*.

Meet the "freestyle evangelicals." Compelled by evangelicalism's conservative theology but averse to the right wing's intolerance and lack of charity toward the poor, they occupy a curious political middle ground. Every four years they independently evaluate the state of the union through the lens of a Jesus-centered faith. But their concerns extend beyond

the conservative morality issues of abortion and gay marriage to progressive matters of social justice, America's role in the world, and care for the environment. The sociologist Stephen Hart describes Christian faith as comprising a set of elemental moral "building blocks" that believers "assemble" in countless combinations to construct their social ethics. Freestyle evangelicals have neither an exclusively Democratic nor Republican worldview; they say they often find themselves in the tiresome position of electing officials who will do the least amount of damage rather than the most good. As one believer told the *Prospect*, "I am a political moderate, not despite my theological conservatism but because of it."

The Bush presidency's extremism has left many moderate believers looking to the Democrats. Jim Wallis is a progressive evangelical and editor of *Sojourners* magazine. In a December *New York Times* op-ed, he challenged Democratic presidential contenders to charge fearlessly onto the moral high ground. "How a candidate deals with poverty is a religious issue, and the Bush administration's failure to support poor working families should be named as a religious failure," he wrote. "Neglect of the environment is a religious issue. Fighting pre-emptive wars based on false claims is a religious issue."

"True faith results in a compassionate concern for those

on the margins. ... Allowing the right to decide what is a religious issue would be both a moral and political tragedy.”

Jonathan Eastvold, 26, is a lifelong Republican and conservative Christian who attended Wheaton College, the premier evangelical institution in the country and alma mater of the Reverend Billy Graham. Eastvold voted for Bush in 2000 but became an avid supporter of Wesley Clark during the Democratic primaries. “The more I’ve thought about politics, the more discontent I’ve become with the facile [relationship] between theological conservatism and political conservatism,” he wrote on the Christians for Clark blog. “[I]n fact, [I] spend most of my time discovering that a consistent reading of the Bible leaves me at odds with the GOP establishment—whether we are talking about policies toward the poor, the environment, foreign policy, or even—perish the thought in light of the last decade of GOP rhetoric—presidential character.”

His posting received enthusiastic “amens” from other Christians fed up with the Bush presidency. “Anyone who really reads the New Testament ... knows ... that Jesus’ teachings are LIBERAL!” exclaimed one.

FREESTYLE EVANGELICALS—THE TERM WAS RECENTLY coined by Steven Waldman, editor of the interfaith Web site Beliefnet—defy the conventional wisdom about fundamentalist Christians. They are mostly white suburbanites in the South, Midwest, and Northwest. Many attend nondenominational megachurches, and their children go to public schools. They number between 8 million and 10 million and comprise 30 percent to 40 percent of the total evangelical vote—roughly the same number as the most hypertraditional evangelicals, the core of the Christian right.

The freestyles helped usher Jimmy Carter into office in 1976 and gave Bill Clinton 55 percent of their vote in both 1992 and 1996. But four years ago, dissatisfied with a party marred by presidential scandal, they changed course and voted for George W. Bush by a 10-point margin. “This amounted to a shift of almost a million votes. ... [M]ore importantly, it was concentrated in key states such as Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, Arkansas, and Florida,” wrote John Green, a political scientist and the director of the Bliss Institute at the University of Akron.

Bush campaigned as a moderate with a “compassionate conservative” agenda that attracted Christian voters who firmly believe in the transformative effects of religious conversion. And like Clinton and Carter before him, Bush effortlessly laced his remarks with the parlance of the born-again: During an early presidential debate in Iowa, for example, he famously named Jesus as his favorite political philosopher, adding, “When you accept Christ as the savior, it changes your heart, it changes your life.” Call that spiritual red meat for the party faithful.

But this election year, many freestyle evangelicals’ votes are up for grabs. This bloc lacks the fervor of traditionalists like Pat Robertson or Jerry Falwell; indeed, most of its members are offended by the dogmatic and self-righteous antics of leaders of the religious right. These believers might be concerned about gay marriage and abortion, but they will not be found picketing outside the Supreme Court anytime soon.

Neither are freestyle evangelicals wilting lilies, abandoning their faith in the face of an aggressively secular mainstream culture. Rather, their beliefs *require* that they show tolerance and respect in a diverse society. Christian Smith is a professor and associate chair of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the author of *Christian America? What Evangelicals Really Want*. He explained it this way in his book: “[Many evangelicals believe] Jesus’ teachings assumed that his followers would always be a minority surrounded by a plurality of nonbelievers, whom they should not try to dominate, but should love and serve for God’s sake.”

Evangelical Christianity is a mighty force in the personal lives of nearly 25 percent of Americans today. While mainline Protestant denominations continue to shrink, evangelical churches are flourishing, thanks in part to members’ high birthrates and successes at passing the faith on to their children. Contrary to secular conventional wisdom, evangelicalism is highly individualistic: Over and above all else, such Christians believe in a converting, transformative, and deeply personal relationship with a living Jesus Christ. Theirs is an abiding faith in the resurrected Christ as their lord and savior; only through him is eternal salvation achieved. Most evangelicals read the Bible as the inerrant and inspired word of God, trusting that all spiritual truth is found within its pages. And they believe that their faith calls them to lives of service, especially through evangelism—spreading the gospel, that is—and mission work. But that is about where the commonalities end.

Secular liberals have long misunderstood the kaleidoscopic diversity of American evangelicalism, thereby granting polarizing figures like Falwell, LaHaye, and James Dobson, the founder of Focus on the Family, too much credit as spokesmen. The media do no better, commonly lumping all conservative Protestants together under the banner of the religious right. This often pejorative labeling blurs the lines between distinct—and sometimes competing—religious movements such as charismatic Christianity, Pentecostalism, and fundamentalism. Further, Smith’s research reveals that nearly 70 percent of conservative Christians do not even identify with or support the Christian right. But news stories like the one on *60 Minutes* perpetuate the idea of an evangelical monolith hungry for political power and marked by intolerance and anti-intellectualism. Ergo, it is not surprising that many Democratic politicians do their best to distance themselves from the very word “evangelical.”

But they should be studying the nuances, because the potential for Democratic votes there is, in fact, strong. The only two Democratic presidents of the past 35 years, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton, were both intimately familiar with evangelicalism. And both, Carter especially, infused political issues with a strong dose of moral imperative rooted in religious faith. Some of the most powerful movements in the progressive tradition—those promoting abolition, child-labor laws, and civil rights—were fueled by religious zeal. Yet today’s liberalism operates in an almost entirely secular sphere of influence. “Just as there are religious fundamentalists with too much sway in the Republican Party, there are secular fundamentalists who have way too much influence in the Democratic Party,” says Jim Wallis, himself a registered Democrat. “If Martin Luther King kept his faith to himself, where would we be today?”

JEFFREY JOHNSON, 28, MAY BE TYPICAL OF THE KIND OF conservative religious voter who is gravitating toward the Democratic side for 2004. He grew up in west Texas, not far from President Bush's hometown of Midland. Like his parents and grandparents, Johnson is an evangelical Christian. But unlike the rest of his staunchly Republican family, he will be casting a ballot against Bush this year as a matter of conscience.

After college at Baylor University, Johnson headed for Princeton, where he is working toward a doctorate in classics and the ancient world. On campus, he meets monthly with other Christian intellectuals who engage and encourage one another with discussion, prayer, and reading. At home, he and his wife often host a diverse group of students for meals and conversation. Last year, more than 30 people packed into his tiny two-bedroom apartment to celebrate Thanksgiving. Johnson's Christian faith weaves its way through all facets of his life. "Ideally, it conditions my every waking thought," he explains.

Johnson voted for Bush in 2000, believing in the rhetoric of compassionate conservatism. He is also firmly opposed to abortion, and feared that a Supreme Court vacancy under a Democratic president would be disastrous for the abortion-rights agenda. Johnson doubted Bush's intellectual heft, but he respected the candidate's professions of religious faith and seemingly moderate politics. How does he feel about Bush today? "In every instance where I credited him with farsighted change and good ideas," Johnson says, "he has turned out to be precisely the opposite of what I had in mind."

As a Christian, Johnson believes that people must work to protect God's creation; his faith requires that he care for his neighbor and leave this world in better shape than when he entered it. This ethos of stewardship affects Johnson's decisions in the voting booth as well: He is furious about the Bush administration's rejection of the Kyoto Protocol to address global warming; he feels that Bush's tax cuts are extremely irresponsible, and shift a crushing burden onto those who can least afford it; and he firmly opposed the Iraq War from the get-go, faulting the president for disregarding the rest of the global community and waging war prematurely on false grounds.

Back home in Texas, Johnson's family can hardly believe this ideological volte-face. Hoping to change the young man's mind, Johnson's grandfather mailed him a copy of David Horowitz's conservative bildungsroman, *Left Illusions: An Intellectual Odyssey*. It saddens Johnson that his family believes his new, mostly secular environment has somehow brainwashed him into "becoming a hardcore communist." That's because ultimately, their shared religious faith requires the entire Johnson family to live under the complete authority of the Bible. "It sounds paradoxical, but holding [the Scriptures as the inspired word of God]—often considered a more theologically conservative position—can land one in

pretty progressive political territory," Johnson explains. "What do we do with verses that talk about God's concern for the poor, the oppressed, orphans, widows, and the [immigrants] in our midst? Do we just ignore these?"

ONE PERSON WHO DOESN'T THINK SO IS FORMER PRESIDENT Jimmy Carter. A born-again Christian and an evangelical himself, Carter is arguably one of the most religious presidents in recent history; he still teaches a Sunday school class at his Baptist church in Plains, Georgia. In a recent phone interview, he laid out a scathing criticism of the Bush domestic agenda.

"Christ was committed to compassion for the most destitute, poor, needy, and forgotten people in our society," he says. "Today, most of the people strongly committed to the Republican philosophy have adopted the proposition that help for the rich is the best way to help even poor people by letting some of the financial benefits drip down to those most deeply in need. [T]he ultra-right wing, in both religion and politics, has abandoned that principle of Jesus Christ's ministry."

Echoing the sentiments of many other moderate believers, Carter also expressed grave concern over the Bush administration's foreign-policy agenda.

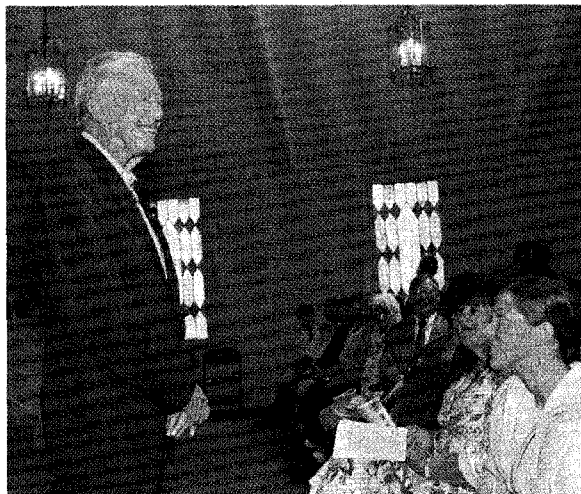
"[W]hat do Christians stand for, based exclusively on the words and actions of Jesus Christ?" he asked rhetorically. "We worship him as a prince of peace ... Therein we should not resort to war as a way to exalt the president as the commander in chief. [Today] it seems as

though it is an attractive thing in Washington to resort to war in the very early stage of resolving an altercation—a completely unnecessary war that President Bush decided to launch against the Iraqis is an example of that."

The fundamentalist Christian Zionist movement is especially vexing to Carter. Conservative evangelicals like House Majority Leader Tom DeLay offer unilateral support to Israel based on the New Testament prophecy that the reconstruction of the ancient kingdom of David will usher in the "end times" and the Second Coming of Christ. Carter summarily dismissed this cause, tersely calling it "a completely foolish and erroneous interpretation of the Scriptures."

"And," he went on, "it has resulted in these last few years with a terrible, very costly, and bloody deterioration in the relationship between Israel and its neighbor. ... [T]his administration, maybe strongly influenced by ill-advised theologians of the extreme religious right, has pretty well abandoned any real effort that could lead to a resolution of the problems between Israel and the Palestinians."

Overall, Carter expresses exactly the arguments that could win Democrats the moderate evangelical vote—provided they make the case. He believes that religious voters who aren't of the Christian right will reject Bush on both his preemptive war and his policies toward the poor. "Those are the two



Plains-Speaking: Former President Carter teaching Sunday school, 2003

principal things in the practical sense that starkly separate the ultra-right Christian community from the rest of the Christian world,” Carter says. “Do we endorse and support peace, and support the alleviation of suffering among the poor and the outcast?”

LATE IN 2001, KARL ROVE DROPPED BY THE AMERICAN Enterprise Institute to share his thoughts on the Bush presidency and electoral strategy with a friendly audience. Benefiting from hindsight, Rove lamented that the Bush campaign had failed to rally all corners of the party faithful, particularly some 4 million white evangelicals, fundamentalists, and Pentecostals who stayed home on election day. “[Y]et they are obviously part of our base,” he declared.

But that might be an overstatement. Judging from the editorial pages of newspapers in battleground states like Florida and West Virginia, Rove could be taking a little too much for granted. In early January, an editorial headlined “How Would Jesus Vote?” in West Virginia’s flagship newspaper, the *Charleston Gazette*, sharply contrasted the actions of the Bush administration with the beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount. The writer summed it up, noting, “[A] glaring contradiction exists: Everything that Jesus stood for seems opposed by Republicans now in control of Washington Why on

homosexuality, but they wince at the shrill, anti-gay posturing of the hard right. Tony Campolo is a progressive evangelical pastor and former professor of sociology at Eastern University, outside Philadelphia. “[Homosexual] behavior is not able to be reconciled with the teachings of Scripture, particularly the first chapter of Romans,” he says. “[But it] was not on Jesus’ top 10 list of sins.” He continues: “What was No. 1 on the list? Religious people who go around creating hardships for everybody [with] their legalism.”

The one issue that still tethers many moderate evangelicals to the Republican Party is abortion. The GOP uses abortion as “a political football,” as Jim Wallis puts it, while the Democrats’ inflexibility on abortion is the single issue blocking many freestyle evangelicals from joining the party ranks. “The Democrats should at least have an open tent where people could be pro-life Catholics, for instance, and still be Democrats,” Wallis argues. “Pro-life and pro-choice voters could unite together in a real effort to reduce teen pregnancy, reform the adoption process, and offer alternatives to women backed into difficult and dangerous choices.”

Of course, the Democrats are hardly on the cusp of making such a dramatic change. It might not hurt them much this year, when many freestyle evangelicals are, in the words of one believer, “voting against Bush rather than for a

To Jimmy Carter, preemptive war and policies toward the poor are the two things that “starkly separate ultra-right Christians from the rest of the Christian world.”

earth do so many churchgoers vote for the opposite of Jesus?”

Florida’s *Palm Beach Post* ran a story in October 2002 headlined “We’re Christians and We’re Not Stupid.” The story profiled an evangelical woman who resented media caricatures of Christianity, saying, “I live a radical Christian life. I take my Bible seriously, and I believe in turning the other cheek.” Defying the conventional wisdom about evangelicals, she went on to declare her support and love for her homosexual neighbors. “God tells us to love one another,” she said simply.

And in late January, editorial columnist William McKenzie wrote in *The Dallas Morning News*, a newspaper that wends its way into the First Bedroom each morning, “Administration Neocons Elbow Evangelicals Aside,” a piece that exposed the culture (socially liberal, centered in Washington and New York) and motivations (the establishment of an American empire) of the powerful neoconservatives lurking behind cow-eyed evangelicals in the Republican Party. “The way those two sides relate affects whether your son or daughter goes to war, whether peace gets struck in the Mideast, and how the war against terrorism gets run,” wrote McKenzie. “At this point, the neocons are winning, hands down.”

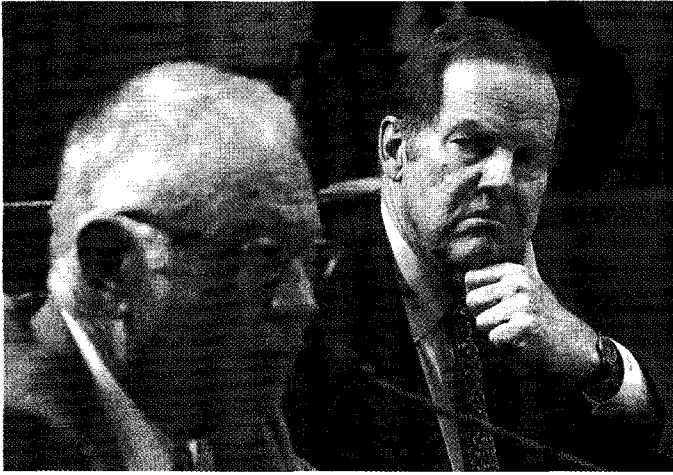
The Bush re-election team has finally decided that a victory in 2004 will be born out of the energy of a newly ignited conservative base. Bush’s support for a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage sends an unmistakable message to conservative Christians, saying, “We haven’t forgotten about you—now do your part.” But that strategy is bound to backfire among moderate believers.

Many freestyle evangelicals privately disapprove of

Democrat.” But what about 2008 and beyond? Can the Democratic umbrella widen just enough to cover freestyle evangelicals after November? Will secular liberals ever be willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with “Jesus people” who aren’t afraid to talk about their faith?

After Jonathan Eastvold’s preferred candidate, Wesley Clark, dropped out of the presidential race, he contacted the Kerry campaign to inquire about starting up a “Christians for Kerry” forum on the senator’s Web site. The campaign Web site already hosted many other interest groups, such as “Firefighters for Kerry” and “Students for Kerry.” Eastvold was politely informed that if he wanted to open up a Yahoo.com Web group, he would be welcome to do so—but he was not invited to join the official campaign Web site.

In addition to being ideological associations, political parties are cultural amalgams. Open, unembarrassed professions of religiosity haven’t been part of the Democratic Party’s culture for some time now. One might say this is particularly true of white Protestant evangelicals; the Democratic Party is the home of many mainline Protestants, the vast majority of black evangelicals, many Catholics, and most Jews, but white evangelicals have long been considered GOP turf. The party won’t change overnight. But the extremist ideology of this administration—clearly antithetical to virtually everything Jesus Christ stood for—has created an opening among religious voters who are a much more diverse lot than the *60 Minutes* segment let on. The Democrats can win some votes, redefine the role that religion plays in American public life, and neutralize one of the right wing’s great wedge issues—if they choose to pursue it. ■



Face-Off: Thomas Kean (right) and his deputy, Lee Hamilton, say they're hard at it, but 9-11 family members like Kristen Breitweiser see a lot of foot-dragging.

Truth Squad

The embattled 9-11 commission has two jobs: get the facts right and figure out exactly who failed when. The Bush administration doesn't seem so keen on that second part.

BY SHAUN WATERMAN

THE RUMORS BEGAN ALMOST AT ONCE.

It was 10:06 a.m. on September 11, 2001, when United Airlines' Flight 93—the last of the four hijacked jets—plowed into a field in rural Pennsylvania. Within hours the coffee-houses of the Arab world were abuzz with speculation that the attacks were the work of the Israeli intelligence service, the Mossad. At the same time, former CIA Director James Woolsey, an exemplar of American neoconservatism, was already claiming that Baghdad was behind the attacks.

Such fantasies persist, even today.

"I have no doubt that al-Qaeda actually did it. ... [But] was it a knife-edge someone else was holding?" asked Al-Jazeera TV, suggesting that all might not be as it seemed in the network's own interview with attack planner Ramzi Binalshibh, who had just laid out for viewers in chilling detail how al-Qaeda had carried out the operation. Vice President Dick Cheney claimed as recently as last September that the attackers were based in Iraq. And in Europe, conspiracy theories continue to proliferate; a poll last year by the German weekly *Die Zeit* found that almost one out of three German respondents under 30 believed the U.S. government itself was behind the attacks.

These theories are fed by a lot of things. Some doubtless have difficulty believing that the mighty United States—the most powerful nation on earth—was brought to its knees, its president sent scuttling around the country in his armored aircraft like a cockroach when the lights are switched on, by the actions of a few religious fanatics armed only with knives, mace, and will.

But more important is the absence of a definitive, authoritative narrative of the attacks and their aftermath. "If my husband had died in a traffic accident that day," says Kristen Breitweiser, widowed by the attacks on the World Trade Center, "I would know everything there is to know about it by now. As it is, I know almost nothing."

Even the basic time line—who did what and when—from the agencies charged with responding appears unreliable in many cases. Official accounts, based on records generated in the mayhem of that day and the sleepless days and nights that followed it, are often incomplete or contradictory. Take one—apparently simple—fact: What time did Air Force One land at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana? Four different times, between 11:48 a.m. and 12:16 p.m., are listed in official documents.

The September 11 commission was supposed to dispel the myths and set the record straight—and lay to rest the ghosts of uncertainty that still haunt the families of so many victims. But the commission is also supposed to lay to rest the ghosts of failure—the failure of policies and of people. The nation's policy-makers want to find out what went wrong with the nation's counterterrorism and intelligence machinery, and what, if anything, can be done to fix it. The families want those whose ineptitude they say left the country defenseless named and, at the very least, shamed.

The commission's report is due at the end of July, in the heat of an election summer where the question of leadership in the attacks' aftermath is likely to be front and center. The stakes could not be higher. But the prospects for success, alas, are decidedly mixed at best.

SO FAR, THE COMMISSION HAS PICKED A GREAT DEAL OF low-hanging fruit. Every government agency it has publicly investigated failed more or less completely—and more or less obviously—to protect citizens that day. The Federal Aviation Administration ignored repeated hijacking threats over the summer. The hijackers fooled consular officers and immigration inspectors with fraudulent documents. NORAD's radar only looked outward. The CIA didn't follow through on tips about the plot, and on and on.

But when it comes to individual accountability, the panel hasn't earned its spurs yet. Commission member John Lehman—a wiry, Reagan-era Navy secretary who has made himself the panel's scourge of political correctness and bureaucratic commonsense failures—is fond of pointing out that “the only person that's been disciplined since 9-11 has been John Poindexter.” Poindexter, of course, was fired by the Pentagon when it “closed” (the technology is still being studied) his Total Information Awareness project last year after revelations that it would trawl data about millions of U.S. citizens in an effort to find patterns of suspicious behavior. Lehman's line, which recently drew applause from the audience at a commission public hearing, is almost correct. Jane Garvey, who presided over an FAA that let the hijackers board with their weapons, was allowed to resign gracefully—though

cision to keep Tenet in place must have been made well before then, “perhaps within hours” of the attacks, and would have been “a no-brainer” given the disruption entailed by any attempt at replacing him—especially at the moment when the CIA was needed more than ever. “When the team is headed for a high-stakes game,” that person says, “you don't fire the quarterback.”

Of course, the commission lacks the power to hire and fire. But so far it has not demonstrated the will to make judgments about the fitness of individuals to hold the public trusts they do. Tenet, along with Donald Rumsfeld, Colin Powell, and their Clinton-era predecessors, is scheduled to give evidence at a hearing in March, when the commission will have the chance to show that, if it is not conducting a witch-hunt, neither is it allowing the guilty to get away with murder by negligence.

TO DATE, THE COMMISSION HAS GENERALLY CHOSEN TO pull its punches, avoiding confrontation wherever possible. Even on basic questions, like the dispute between NORAD and the FAA about when the military was warned that multiple hijacking attacks were in progress, or how well the front-line agencies in New York responded, the commission hung back for months before issuing the subpoenas it needed.

To date, the commission has pulled its punches and avoided confrontation. Even on basic factual questions, the commission delayed issuing subpoenas for months.

many senior security officials from her tenure now hold equivalent or higher posts at the new Transportation Security Administration. But more or less everyone else is still warming the seat he or she was sitting in on September 11.

Commissioners, with the vocal support of the relatives, have asked some very pointed public questions of some officials. Garvey tied herself in such verbal knots under questioning last year that FAA staff had to issue a “clarification” after she spoke. And Mary Ryan, who as head of consular affairs at the State Department led the office that issued the hijackers their visas, left in a hurry after a recent hearing, clearly upset and ignoring reporters' questions.

But these are small fish and there are bigger ones the commission has yet to pursue. George Tenet remains the director of central intelligence, despite his leadership during a series of disasters for the intelligence community, culminating most recently, of course, with the Iraq debacle. And the White House seems committed to keeping him there—at least until after the next election, when the rumor mill says he will be replaced by House Intelligence Committee Chairman Porter Goss. Two weeks after the September 11 attacks, President Bush visited the CIA's Langley, Virginia, headquarters to declare, “I've got a lot of confidence in [Tenet] and I've got a lot of confidence in the CIA,” and to tell a national TV audience—to loud applause from the assembled agency employees—that the country had “the best intelligence [it] can possibly have thanks to the men and women of the CIA.” One figure familiar with the inner workings of the Bush White House told me he believed the de-

At the very first public hearing, which the commission held in New York at the end of March 2003, it became obvious that the Big Apple was not going to play nice. The hearing schedule called for Mayor Michael Bloomberg to make a few welcoming remarks that morning and for his chiefs of police and fire to appear the next day for detailed question-and-answer sessions about their agencies' responses to the attack. Instead, Bloomberg—whose appearance was confirmed only that same morning by his office—arrived with both Police Commissioner Ray Kelly and Fire Commissioner Nicholas Scoppetta in tow, gave an opening statement, and then said that all three would be happy to answer questions. The following day, Kelly and Scoppetta were no-shows.

Commission officials said their whole relationship with New York and its agencies was colored from the beginning by the city's fear of lawsuits alleging that it had been disastrously ill-prepared before the attacks and had played down the lingering environmental effects afterward. Concerned that anything they provided the panel might end up being used against them in court, city officials clammed up. “It's terrible,” is how one senior commission staffer described the city's cooperation at the time. Yet no subpoenas were issued until late November. By then commission staffers had negotiated access to most of what they needed anyway.

The delay—any delay—was potentially disastrous because the commission is so short of time. It was originally given just 18 months to do its work, making the whole project a race against the clock from the beginning, and the

panel recently had to fight for extra time to finish its inquiries against the opposition of House Speaker Dennis Hastert and stalling by the White House.

The administration eventually conceded and gave the commissioners the two months they said they needed. That pattern—delay until the last moment, then cave—has been characteristic of the administration's attitude from the get-go. It was only after a series of public appearances last summer—at which the commission's affable chairman, former GOP New Jersey Governor Thomas Kean, repeatedly complained about foot-dragging by officials and singled out certain agencies for criticism—that White House Chief of Staff Andy Card finally pressured cabinet secretaries to make sure that their departments responded to document requests in a timely fashion. "You wouldn't think this is the way they'd behave if they had nothing to hide," says Mindy Kleinberg, who lost her husband, Alan, in the attacks on New York.

Despite that suspicion, the commission's propensity for punch pulling has been most evidently apparent in its dealings with the White House. Commissioner Tim Roemer, a former Democratic representative from Indiana who sat on the earlier, more narrowly focused joint congressional inquiry into pre-9-11 intelligence failures, says he knew from the start that access to White House officials and documents would be a problem. Roemer, who as the commission's most outspoken member has become something of a thorn in the administration's side, had good reason to know: So poor was the access that the joint congressional inquiry was granted to White House officials and documents that the panel included a whole appendix on it in its report.

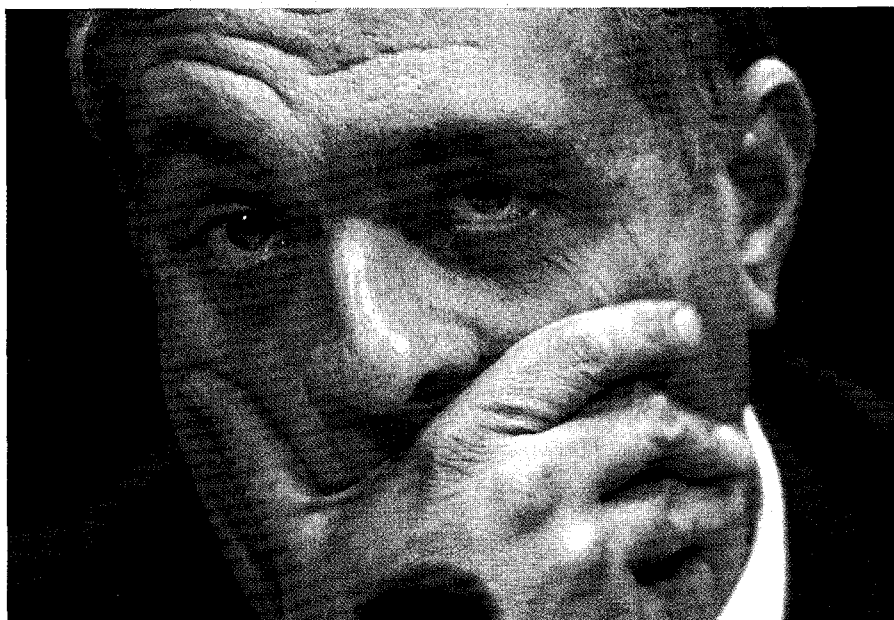
Last July, almost the halfway point in the commission's appointed time, Kean gave a rare press briefing, saying that the commission had already been granted access to documents that had been denied to the joint congressional inquiry. But he added that "conditions of access," like "the number of staff ... the place in which the access would occur, note taking, and what happens to note taking," were still being negotiated. His deputy, Washington wise man and former House Intelligence Committee veteran Lee Hamilton, always the more measured and cautious of the two, was quick to stress—in what has since become something of a mantra for commission staff—that "no requested access has been denied."

But while it may be true that the White House has never actually said "no" to anything the commission has asked for, the commission—in a classic piece of Washington Kabuki—has always been very careful about how it phrases its requests, and its negotiations with the White House, launched in the first few months of 2003, have dragged on for nearly a year.

In November 2003, the commission announced that it had reached agreement on the terms of access to the adminis-

tration's intelligence crown jewels: the Presidential Daily Briefings. The briefings, the CIA's summary of the most important threats to the nation circulated to the president and a handful of top aides every morning, are the most closely held intelligence documents in existence. The terms of the deal were complex—items from the briefings, not the documents themselves, were divided into two categories, each of which could be reviewed by a different subcommittee of commissioners and staff—and appeared obscure. The subcommittee members could take notes, but the White House had the right to "review" those notes before they were communicated to the full commission for inclusion in the report. Did this mean that the White House had the right to edit them? "Yes," said some; "no," declared others.

Much of the ambiguity was due to the extraordinary fact that this deal—reached between bureaucrats and lawmak-



Hot Seat: The commission has taken on the small fry; the big fish include CIA Director George Tenet.

ers and negotiated by lawyers—did not appear to be properly written down anywhere. "It is in the form of a series of communications between us and the White House," executive director Philip Zelikow told me at the time of the agreement, declining to give any more details.

Partly as a result, the deal—heralded by commission spokesman Al Felzenburg as "the end of the last outstanding process issue"—quickly broke down. By the beginning of February this year it proved merely to have shifted the terrain of negotiations from the abstract (i.e., what access should the commission have) to the concrete (i.e., which of the notes produced by the subcommittees can be seen by other commissioners). What followed was what Zelikow describes as "a lot of back and forth ... of 'Please use this word not that one.' ... We ended up addressing [the notes] in a way that the review team found satisfactory and that the White House was content with." The final bargain was struck a few days later. The result? A 17-page summary of what the subcommittee members learned, which Zelikow says is a "much more detailed report [on the briefings] than the White House expected." According to Roemer, it's a "strained,

edited, vetted report” that will not allow commissioners to make a measured judgment.

The families are highly critical of the way the commission has handled the administration, but especially the White House. “They let the negotiations drag on interminably,” says Breitweiser, “then turn around and tell us there isn’t enough time to issue a subpoena, because if the White House wants to fight it, they can tie the commission up in court until the investigation is over. Well, whose fault is that?”

More disturbingly, other critics privately charge that Zelikow, an unassuming, bespectacled historian, has deliberately soft-pedaled the inquiry to protect the administration, and in particular his close former colleague, national-security adviser Condoleezza Rice, whom he helped to establish a new, streamlined structure for the Bush National Security Council during the transition. They accuse him of plotting behind the scenes with Bush political supremo Karl Rove.

When asked about these allegations, Felzenburg explained that it’s not commission policy to allow Zelikow to deny them personally. The spokesman dismissed conflict-of-interest allegations. “Anyone who has any real knowledge of the business [of intelligence and foreign policy] has worked in the field before and will have these kind of issues,” he said. “We have every confidence in him.” Felzenberg said that

is the wrong question to ask. The point is that the machinery that was supposed to make sure the president knew what he needed to was so broken he could not see that the country was staring down the barrel of a huge new threat.

And the process of fixing that machinery appears to be stuck in the morass of election-year bickering and recrimination over Iraq. The vast majority of intelligence-policy reforms recommended by the joint congressional inquiry in December 2002 remain unimplemented, a fact that is likely to become unignorably—even embarrassingly—obvious at Senate hearings planned for this spring. The commission’s report is likely to fare little better, not only because it, too, will be caught in the partisan crossfire of the approaching election but because whatever public recommendations it makes will not profoundly affect the real process of intelligence and counterterrorism policy reform—a process that began on September 12, 2001, but in secret and behind closed doors.

These reforms—some of which are not even publicly acknowledged—include the repeal of bans on U.S. intelligence agencies carrying out assassinations and working with torturers, murderers, and drug dealers; the extra-legal seizure and indefinite detention of terrorist suspects; the “rendition” (i.e., international transfer with extradition or other legal process) of nationals from friendly countries like

The commission’s Philip Zelikow, an unassuming, bespectacled historian, is a former colleague of Condoleezza Rice, which has led some to charge a conflict of interest.

Zelikow has never spoken with Rove about the inquiry. Privately, commission officials say that the telephone conversations with Rove relate solely to the job from which Zelikow has taken a leave of absence to work on the commission: director of the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia.

ZELIKOW’S ROLE IN SHAPING THE BUSH NATIONAL SECURITY Council is important because the structure of the national-security bodies are at the heart of the commission’s inquiry into counterterrorism policy.

In May 2002, after a slew of press reports, Rice acknowledged that one briefing, delivered to the president on August 6, 2001, during his “working holiday” on the family ranch in Crawford, Texas, had discussed the possibility that al-Qaeda might try to attack the United States. The briefing was no “smoking gun”—though there may have been other, more specific warnings—but it is interesting because of what it tells us about the way intelligence officials processed information for the president. “Whatever the next attack is,” says Dale Watson, former head of the FBI’s counterterrorism operations, “I guarantee you somebody’s already written about it. But how does that help you? There are people writing about every conceivable mode of attack.” This is what analysts call the “signal-to-noise-ratio” problem—separating relevant information from chaff—and it lies at the center of the questions about the nation’s intelligence capabilities that the commission must address.

“What did the president know and when did he know it?”

Canada and Germany for torture in the dungeons of allies in the war on terrorism like Syria and Saudi Arabia; the massive expansion of the role of U.S. Special Forces and military intelligence. The list goes on.

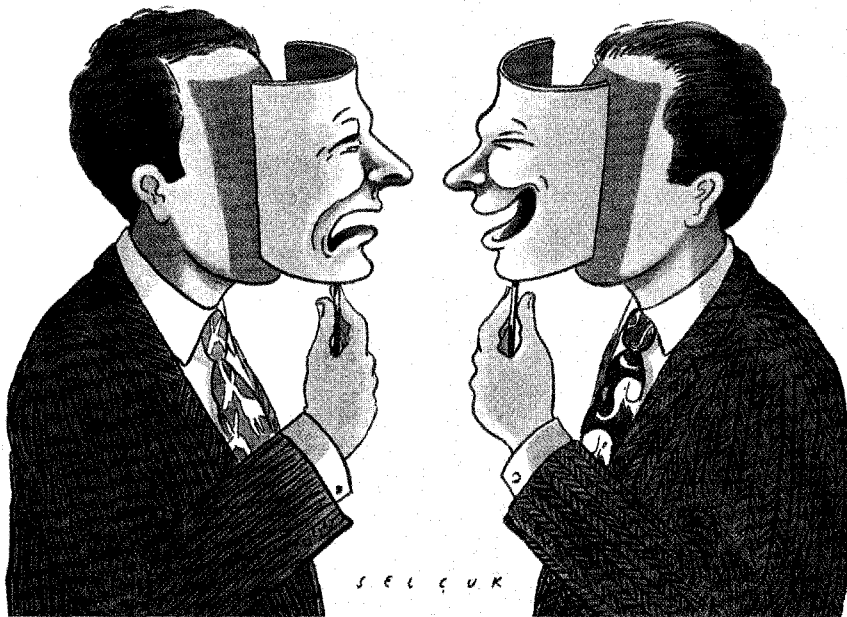
Far from the public hearings, the commission is part of the debate over these reforms as well. Senior staff members, according to Zelikow, plan to write a series of monographs about needed changes to intelligence and counterterrorism policy, appendices to the commission’s public report that are, as he put it, “too detailed to be of interest to the non-specialist reader.” Some would be classified, he said.

If the commission cannot fire those who failed, and cannot be part of a meaningful public debate about how to protect the country, all that is left to it is the production of a credible narrative, one strong enough to overcome the inconsistencies inevitably plaguing any time line of those chaotic hours. If it fails at that task, dubious alternative theories about that day’s events will spread like fungus in the cracks between the facts. If the commission cannot win the trust of the public—specifically of key constituencies like the organized relatives of the September 11 victims—it may end up like the Warren Commission, feeding the very conspiracy theories it was set up to debunk. In that case, there is a serious danger that the amateur history of the September 11 attacks will end up as involuted and prone to farcical excess as that of the Kennedy assassination. ■

SHAUN WATERMAN is the homeland and national-security editor for *United Press International*.

Currents

CULTURE



Liberalism's Lost Script

Democrats used to thrive on Hollywood endings. Today, liberalism is more like a dark, complicated novel. It's time to go back to making movies.

BY NEAL GABLER

LATELY, TRYING TO DETERMINE EX-actly how we became embroiled in Iraq has become a kind of intellectual parlor game. Was it oil? Settling old scores? Diverting attention from terrorism? Fulfilling the neoconservative agenda?

There is probably some truth in each of these, but of all the reasons that have been adduced for the war in Iraq—and for the administration's failure to have devised a comprehensive postwar plan there—the most significant may be the least conspiratorial, complex, or even politically motivated. The war planners

never really thought there was any downside to going in, or that anything could go wrong in the aftermath. They assumed that the troops would sweep across Iraq without resistance, that Iraqis would greet them as liberators and stick flowers in the barrels of their rifles, and that an Iraqi government would be installed in relatively short order. They made these assumptions, we now know, not on the basis of any intelligence or understanding of the Iraqi situation. They made them because it seems they were in thrall to an idea that

has become a fundamental component of modern American conservatism generally. It is the idea that, in the end, everything turns out well.

One can see just how significant an underpinning of conservative doctrine this has become by looking at a range of issues, from the jobless recovery (the jobs are coming, the administration promises) to the ballooning deficit (the deficit will shrink, the president says) to imperiled public education (testing will take care of everything) to Medicare (the market will bring down costs). Wishful thinking is not only the Bush administration's primary policy; it is its governing ideology.

But if conservatives act as if happy endings are always in the offing, liberals, by contrast, have come to act as if nothing can ever go right, as if a cloud surrounds every silver lining. Just compare the old liberal version of the "domino theory" in Southeast Asia with the new conservative version in the Middle East. In the first, the dominoes of communist expansion tumble, creating a threatening world. In the second, the dominoes of democracy tumble, creating a free and peaceful world. In short, conservatives have, in the classical sense of the word, a comic vision of the world, liberals a tragic vision—a difference that goes a long way toward explaining why liberals have had such a hard time in electoral politics recently.

Or to put it in more homely terms, conservatism has become a Hollywood movie, liberalism has become literature. Like the movie blockbusters, contemporary conservatives centralize action, extol the power of the individual to bend the world to his or her will, demonize enemies to the point where anything short of annihilation would be a surrender, operate from an absolute confidence in the hero's right-

ness while treating opposition to it as a form of treason, and promise the comforting catharsis of eventual victory that confirms everything that has gone before. Contemporary liberals, on the other hand, like the best literature, centralize thought and deliberation rather than action, fasten on human interconnectedness and the inability of any one individual (or nation) to command events, attempt to understand the complexity of life, operate from a decidedly wary position when it comes to absolute certainties, and promise no final victories.

THE AESTHETIC REVERSAL

It was not always so. Conservatism has its roots in Thomas Hobbes, with his jaundiced view of human nature, and in Edmund Burke, with his emphasis on a natural order with which one tamp-

To less well-heeled Americans, it had the virtue of seeming tough-minded and manly, a way of facing the world without illusions and of avoiding the unpredictable consequences of intervention. What conservatism pointedly did not promise was that some good would necessarily come of all this inaction. A world without illusions was also a world without giddy expectations.

It was liberalism that was idealistic and hopeful, liberalism that believed in our better angels. Liberalism has its roots in John Locke, with his faith in human possibility, and in William James and John Dewey, who thought man was less a passive victim of history than an active shaper of it. In political terms, liberalism encouraged social welfare, economic justice, free trade, compassion, and a sense of community. In foreign policy, at least by the 20th cen-

self as an instrument of providence, and he firmly believed that if the motive was good, nothing would go wrong. As one of his biographers, Kenneth S. Davis, wrote of Roosevelt's attitude, "It was by God's design that he was the axis, the focus, the radiant star." It accounted for a large portion of his charm. When Roosevelt famously asserted, in his first inaugural address, that we had nothing to fear but fear itself—when, in fact, Americans had a great deal to fear—he was delivering the boldest assertion of willed optimism as a national tonic. In this view, the world doesn't just operate by natural forces, as conservatives then would have had one believe. Roosevelt suggested that it operates by men who are assisted by providential forces, which is why he was so confident and why the nation drew confidence from him. Not for nothing was his theme song "Happy Days Are Here Again."

Twenty years later, John F. Kennedy demonstrated how deeply this optimism had become embedded in liberalism; he was practically the physical embodiment of hope. But somewhere between Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, conservatism and liberalism changed places. Though it is impossible to identify all the factors that may have undermined liberal optimism, one element was certainly an ongoing campaign conservatives had conducted since Roosevelt's death to conflate his exuberance with a kind of willful obliviousness to communist expansionism.

But it wasn't all the conservatives' fault. Optimism is difficult to maintain when things don't turn out the way they're forecasted. No one was more an apostle of liberal optimism than Lyndon Johnson, who had studied, after all, at Roosevelt's knee, but the Vietnam War eroded confidence in government and ultimately forced liberals into a pessimism about the value of trying to do good in an uncertain and dangerous world. Indeed, the war divided the Democratic Party not only between hawks and doves but also between those who believed in America's mission as the beacon of freedom and those who had come to doubt it. Once the war turned bad, liberals turned wary, fixating on examining how things had gone wrong. As everyone now knows, this was the new

Like movie blockbusters, conservatives centralize action, extol the power of individuals, demonize enemies, and promise the catharsis of victory.

ers only at grave risk. This was hardly a prescription for optimism, much less Pollyannaish faith that all will end well. Rather, it was a form of hard-boiled realism. You had to take the world as it was and hope for the best. Translated into politics, conservatism—at least in its American incarnation—encouraged social Darwinism, economic rapacity, protectionism, a minimal government, self-reliance, and independence. For better or worse, people were to be left to their own devices without any interference. In foreign policy, conservatism was basically isolationist except when, in the natural course of things, America could reap rewards without undue risk. In effect, it was an ideology in which power and fate ruled.

If there wasn't much about this form of conservatism that was inspiring, it did nevertheless have its flinty attractions. To the oligarchs of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it legitimized economic and social inequities because these were, after all, the products of natural forces. (Indeed, even depressions were thought to be natural purgatives.)

tury, the outlook was largely internationalist, encouraging democracy and cooperation that would release goodness. This was the ideology of optimism, pointing not to how things inevitably were but to how they should be, and not to man's helplessness in the natural swirl but to his greater destiny. In liberalism, idealism about a better world was joined to optimism about the possibility of making that world a reality.

While conservatism was serving up economic brutes, liberalism was serving up Woodrow Wilson, the last century's first and perhaps greatest idealist who laid as the basis for war not the realpolitik of conservatives but the larger principle of freedom. "We look for no profit. We look for no advantage," he announced in what would have amounted to heresy for conservatives, who believed that profit and advantage were the best reasons for doing things. Wilson's internationalist idealism would be tempered by New Dealers skeptical about the costs of American interventionism, but his basic faith would be amplified by Franklin Roosevelt. Roosevelt saw him-

liberalism—gun-shy and cautious. It no longer embraced a “rendezvous with destiny,” as Roosevelt had declared. By the 1970s and the Carter administration, it had a meeting with malaise.

Not at all accidentally, while liberalism was undergoing its soul-searching, conservatism was undergoing a face-lift. The modern conservative movement, spearheaded by Barry Goldwater, had been as sour and antagonistic as the old conservative movement. Its prescriptions were cast in gloom, especially when set against Johnson’s bold self-assurance. Ronald Reagan changed all that. Reagan’s major contribution to conservatism was not ideological (he basically followed the old Goldwater line). It was aesthetic. While deploying simplistic sound bites like “government is the problem” that drove liberals to distraction, Reagan, who had been a great admirer of Roosevelt, was accomplishing something much more profound. He managed to graft Roosevelt’s implacable optimism and sense of destiny onto a conservative movement that had long resisted those things, and he did so at the very time when liberalism had turned pessimistic.

This, perhaps above all else, is why conservatism suddenly moved from the margins to the political center. Conservatives still seemed to believe that natural forces determined the course of events, but Reagan seemed to think that nature was not indifferent but progressive. A movie actor who had made his living by conveying a sense of confidence to audiences, Reagan as a politician was equally cheery and free of doubt, and just as American movies typically had happy endings, he convinced Americans that the country would have a happy ending, too. In effect, Reagan turned conservative politics into a movie. History was moving in the right direction. Everything was going to be all right. It was morning in America. Polls indicated that most Americans did not agree with Reagan’s policy positions, but they loved his attitude, which was liberalism’s old attitude. Whatever else he did, Reagan, like Roosevelt and Kennedy before him, seemed certain of victory.

The aesthetic of certainty, Reagan’s gift to the conservative movement, has been a gift that keeps on giving.

Invoking God and prattling about his faith, George W. Bush has portrayed himself as a tribune of the lord, working in his service and operating under his blessing, which liberals may see as a sop to Bush’s evangelical base but which also underscores the president’s sense of righteousness—a man, as Pat Robertson recently said, who was tapped by providence just as Roosevelt was. This is what Bush political guru Karl Rove constantly stresses. Act as if you are the Chosen One. Be certain. Be confident. Don’t entertain any doubts. Don’t call for sacrifice or introspection. Keep telling everybody that everything will be all right.

Along with this sense of self-righteousness is also a sense of luck. Like many American movie heroes, George W. Bush has been a remarkably lucky man—lucky in his upbringing; lucky in his elevation to the presidency; lucky, if one wants to call it that, in suddenly becoming a war president at a time when his administration was foundering and his popularity plummeting; lucky even in his timing of the Iraq War. The luck as much as the optimism has buoyed his appeal because it promises that the country will be as lucky as he. Things just seem to fall right for conservatives.

Nothing could be more contrary to the new liberalism, which has eschewed simplification, gloss, and certitude for nuance, honesty, and contingency—

again, movies versus literature. Perhaps because they have lived with this for more than two decades now, liberals have come to embrace this uncertainty and skepticism as a kind of superiority. They don’t demagogue. They see things clearly. They face the world not as they want it to be but as it is, which is of course precisely what conservatives used to say when they were losing elections.

This fall’s presidential contest will turn on many things, but one of them will certainly be the parties’ contrasting aesthetics: the comforting bromides of conservative cheerfulness versus the disturbing sobriety of new liberalism’s cold glare. But while it may be foolish and even dangerous to view the world as anything but tragic, doing so isn’t a very promising way to win votes. Twenty-five years ago, conservatives stole liberal optimism, and George W. Bush, currently bumping from one disaster to another, is relying on it to pull him through this election. He may succeed—unless liberals can rediscover their Rooseveltian sense of hope and convince Americans that they again have a rendezvous with destiny. That is both liberalism’s tradition and its traditional appeal. ■

NEAL GABLER, *the author of An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood and Life: The Movie: How Entertainment Conquered Reality, is writing a biography of Walt Disney.*

BOOKS

Foreign Discomfort

THE SORROWS OF EMPIRE: MILITARISM, SECRECY, AND THE END OF THE REPUBLIC BY CHALMERS JOHNSON • METROPOLITAN BOOKS • 400 PAGES • \$25.00

AMERICA UNBOUND: THE BUSH REVOLUTION IN FOREIGN POLICY BY IVO H. DAALDER AND JAMES M. LINDSAY • THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION • 246 PAGES • \$22.95

BY LAURA SECOR

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH’S FOREIGN policy has been nothing if not polarizing. Nearly all the Democratic primary candidates were able to throw darts at it in their stump speeches to cheers of approval. The front tables of urban bookstores teem with anti-Bush

manifestos, and no end of exposés on the administration’s mendacity circulate through networks of protesters over the Web.

There’s something intoxicating about all this, but also reason to be wary. Polarization can be a mixed blessing

for the opposition in an election year. It doesn't only make Democrats and Republicans more energetically partisan; it also emboldens the radical fringes of both parties and draws them increasingly into the mainstream.

Liberals know how little they like the looks of this on the right. It's not much prettier on the left, where what passes for a foreign-policy vision can be frighteningly irresponsible in its analysis and offers virtually no practicable prescription. Chalmers Johnson's *The Sorrows of Empire* is no doubt a response to the

respond rationally to actual security needs and concerns. Not the United States. Rather, writes Johnson, there are exactly five American post-Cold War foreign-policy objectives: to maintain absolute military preponderance, to eavesdrop on the world's people in order to flaunt our state-of-the-art technology, to control as many sources of petroleum as possible, to provide work and income for our military-industrial complex, and to keep our soldiers comfortable and entertained on lavishly appointed foreign bases.



Toy Soldier: Bush's foreign policy is reckless—and so are some critics on the left.

reckless foreign policy of the Bush administration. But in its own recklessness, the book rehearses many of the conspiracy theories, invidious comparisons, and specious arguments that make leftist foreign-policy critiques so easy to caricature. We undoubtedly owe it to Bush that such a book is being released this year by a reputable publisher and has been respectfully reviewed in *The New York Times*.

To hear Johnson tell it, the United States has never faced a genuine threat, never had a legitimate strategic interest, and never been motivated in its foreign policy by anything other than greed. Other state actors—including the “small, poverty-stricken, but resolutely defiant regime in North Korea”—may

This last objective is central to Johnson's analysis. The United States maintains 725 military bases around the world, Johnson tells us, from Okinawa to Guantanamo Bay, and many of them include such amenities as air conditioning, fitness rooms, and movie theaters. The country-club comfort thus afforded to American servicemen and women is therefore the primary purpose of U.S. overseas engagement, according to Johnson. We have built an “empire of bases,” and they are “not really intended to contribute to war fighting capabilities. They are the headquarters for our proconsuls, visible manifestations of our imperial reach.”

But Johnson does see a calculated in-

terest as the true reason for the reconfiguration of U.S. bases around the Middle East, the Balkans, and Central Asia as opposed to Western Europe. It's not that the end of the Cold War has produced a shift in strategic priorities. Supposedly, the bases will help us secure the oil pipeline that we hope to run from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan and eventually to the Balkans. Of course, U.S. intervention in both Afghanistan and the Balkans was motivated not by what Johnson disdainfully refers to almost always in scare quotes—“humanitarian intervention”—or by the need to confront a terrorist organization that had become intertwined with the very structure of the Afghan state and directly attacked the United States. It was all about this supposed oil pipeline—a notion Ken Silverstein thoroughly debunked in these pages, nearly two years ago [see “No War for Oil!” July 22, 2002] but that still holds sway in some conspiracy-minded circles. Johnson, in one of his most bizarrely free-associative passages, suggests that the Department of Defense left the bases in Kosovo and Bosnia out of its last accounting of overseas assets in order to disguise their true purpose in this oil scheme.

Johnson's analysis is fraught with contradictions that can make your head spin. He claims that former military officials in government will turn foreign policy in an increasingly martial direction, yet elsewhere he rightly notes that civilians in the Bush administration have been far more hawkish than such military figures as Colin Powell and Richard Armitage. In fact, military leaders, who know well the costs of war, tend to be cautious about the use of American force overseas. Certainly the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Johnson opposes the very existence of this institution) resisted intervening in Kosovo, where Johnson, too, would apparently have preferred inaction.

More to the point, Johnson seems to divine no legitimate purpose for the military's existence. Its values, and hence American imperial values, are as follows: “military machismo, sexual orthodoxy, socialized medicine for the chosen few, cradle-to-grave security, low pay, stressful family relationships

(including the murder of spouses), political conservatism, and an endless harping on behaving like a warrior even though many of the wars fought in the last decade or more have borne less resemblance to traditional physical combat than to arcade computer games.”

But Johnson can’t decide whether American soldiers are pampered imperial proconsuls with rotten values or poor dupes manipulated into miserable service careers by the Pentagon. In one passage, he writes, “These military city-states [the bases] teach American youths arrogance and racism, instilling in them the basic ingredients of racial superiority.” Elsewhere, Johnson notes that 38 percent of the U.S. armed forces is nonwhite, and he laments that disadvantaged youths get lured into the military’s maw. These suckers apparently don’t even realize that joining the Army might place them in harm’s way. Writes Johnson, “What the Pentagon is not saying to the Private Lynchs [sic] and their families is that all soldiers, regardless of their duties, stand a real chance of injury or death because they chose the military as a route of social mobility.”

Not only does the United States have no affirmative duty on account of its preponderant power, in Johnson’s view; it does not even need to defend itself. Johnson writes as though the terrorist threat were wholly apocryphal. “In many ways, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 came as manna from heaven to an administration determined to ramp up military budgets,” he writes. If Johnson believes that anything at all should be done to secure the nation against possible future attacks, he does not say so. He opposes the installation of a regional commander for homeland defense, is against using force overseas, and his view of the function of intelligence-gathering agencies is categorically dim. He’s not even much for multilateralism, scoffing as he does at the continued existence of NATO.

Worse, Johnson deploys arguments about human rights and democracy opportunistically. He complains about American bases in such undemocratic countries as Uzbekistan, but makes nothing of the U.S. defeat of a decidedly anti-democratic regime in Afghan-

istan. He thunders about an American contractor’s role in training Bosnian and Croatian troops that “went on to conduct systematic and bloody ethnic exterminations of Serbs, accompanied by many war crimes.” And yet Serbian “ethnic cleansing” (it appears only in quotes) is the cause of no such outrage because it might require Johnson to wrestle with a moral question rather than simply presume that American militarists were eager (all evidence of their reluctance notwithstanding) to establish an indefinite presence in resourceless, landlocked, unstable Kosovo.

Johnson’s is a worldview of almost reflexive negativity. If there are six possible motives for an American action and five of them make that action a rational, if debatable, means to a desirable end, the sixth must be the true motive. That’s a mind-set that has long

if so, is such an order a vehicle for American power or a check against its abuse? Do we believe, with the neoconservatives, that American pre-eminence is, or could be, better and more stabilizing for the world than a balance of power shared with states like China and Russia? Do we share the Wilsonian view that American power confers a responsibility to spread American liberties? Or do we reject, with the realists, any role that interferes in the internal affairs of other states, as well as any attempt to amass overwhelming power, on the assumption that such predominance invites counterbalancing and ultimately destabilizes the world?

These are questions that the far left rarely engages but that preoccupy a broad bipartisan swath of the political center. If the Democratic Party has not provided a unified answer to them, in all

The reality of virtually unchallenged American power raises deep moral and strategic questions that cannot be answered simply by wishing that power away.

plagued the left and undermined the usefulness of its critique. Here is where it got Chalmers Johnson on September 11: “Until passenger manifests revealed that the airliner hijackers were mostly from Saudi Arabia, I myself thought that the attacks could be blowback from American policies in any number of places, including Chile, Argentina, Indonesia, Greece, all of Central America, or Okinawa, not to mention Palestine and Iran.”

REAL THREAT, REAL QUESTIONS

That no serious foreign-policy analyst presumed that the 9-11 attackers were Chilean or Okinawan is more than incidental. There is, in fact, a geopolitically specific terrorist threat, whether or not one agrees with the way the Bush administration confronted it. And the reality of virtually unchallenged American power raises deep and genuine moral and strategic questions that cannot be answered simply by wishing that power away.

Do we envision a world order governed by alliances and institutions, and,

fairness neither have the Republicans. The Bush administration, with its radical repositioning of the Republican Party on such strategic issues, has brought new urgency to the discussion.

In *America Unbound*, Brookings Institution fellow Ivo H. Daalder and Council on Foreign Relations Vice President James M. Lindsay argue that in promoting unilateralism, preemption, and the extension of unchallenged and undisguised American hegemony, Bush has revolutionized American grand strategy. In their briskly readable, narrative account of Bush’s foreign-policy decision making, Daalder and Lindsay contend that although the terrorist attacks of September 11 accelerated the Bush revolution and in many significant ways shaped its outcome, Bush himself came into the White House with a unilateralist agenda. As a candidate he assembled a team of aggressively opinionated experts to advise him. Bush was not, however, a passive figurehead atop this structure. Rather, he mediated among his advisers, developing a unique synthesis

of the assertive nationalism of Dick Cheney, the neoconservatism of Paul Wolfowitz, and the pragmatic realism of Colin Powell.

The claim that Bush is in charge of his foreign policy is hard to assess in the absence of knowledge about the true inner workings of the Bush White House. On the evidence, it could just as easily be argued that the warring intellectual tendencies inside the administration have produced an incoherent foreign policy precisely because Bush has proved a weak manager, buffeted by the more forceful personalities and intellects in his cabinet. That might explain the baffling welter of explanations for the Iraq War, as well as the lack of implementable planning for its aftermath. Still, Daalder and Lindsay make a good case for the consistency of Bush's personal vision, which is, in their view, "audacious rather than cautious, proactive rather than reactive, and risk-prone rather than risk-averse."

So, too, has Bush shaped American actions abroad with his assumptions about the American role in the world. These assumptions are as unrealistically sunny and self-regarding as Johnson's are jaundiced and self-flagellating. "If the United States led, others would follow," Daalder and Lindsay recount Bush concluding. "They would join with America because they shared its values and interests. To be sure, some countries might object to how Washington intended to lead. But Bush was convinced they would come around once the benefits of American action became clear."

The fallacy of this thinking was never more obvious than a year ago, when traditional Cold War allies such as France and Germany declined to follow the lead of a heedless U.S. administration as it headed off to war in Iraq. The United States, Britain, and Spain held a lonely summit in the Azores on March 16. "Nothing could have underscored these leaders' international isolation more graphically than this meeting in the middle of nowhere," write Daalder and Lindsay. "It was seen as a defeat," Powell later conceded, "and it was a defeat."

Part of the problem, the authors note, was that "Bush's worldview sim-

ply made no allowance for others' doubting the purity of American motives." And not only did other nations—even our allies—require persuasion, their opinions, as it turned out, mattered. Grace alone, however much it was lacking, would not have solved the crisis. "The deeper problem was that the fundamental premise of the Bush revolution—that America's security rested on an America unbound—was mistaken," Daalder and Lindsay conclude. Their plea, like that of so many Democratic foreign-policy thinkers, is for a multilateral foreign policy that models the liberal values it promotes.

That's a sound message that echoes the best critical wisdom on the foreign policy of the last four years. Daalder and Lindsay have done an excellent job of chronicling history in the making, and of doing so soberly, with insight rather than vitriol. Nevertheless, one may come away from their book still wishing for something more. Multilateralism is a means nearly all liberals can agree on. But the question

remains, to what end? How exactly do we view the role of the United States, acting in concert with others, if we don't accept Bush's premise that the projection of American power always promotes the common good, or the far left's equally dubious assumption that American power is always devoid of any rational purpose?

Here is where the hard, affirmative work begins: to define a foreign policy that takes security concerns seriously but does not abuse the public's fears, that strives to promote the best of American values without simply assuming we know what's best for others, and that neither retreats from the world nor frightens it with profligate use of U.S. military might. Working through these issues isn't just an intellectual exercise; it's an urgent task for those who hope the American people will entrust power to them. ■

LAURA SECOR, a former Prospect deputy editor, is a freelance writer living in New York.

BOOKS

Return to Empire

AN END TO EVIL: HOW TO WIN THE WAR ON TERROR BY DAVID FRUM AND RICHARD PERLE • RANDOM HOUSE • 284 PAGES • \$25.95

AMERICA'S INADVERTENT EMPIRE BY WILLIAM ODOM AND ROBERT DUJARRIC • YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS • 285 PAGES • \$30.00

BY KARL E. MEYER

TO READERS FAMILIAR WITH THE memoirs and histories of Great Britain's imperial era, the echoes evoked by these volumes are uncanny. Their outlook strikingly resembles that of Britain's ruling elite, circa 1890–1905, the heyday of New Imperialism—the same nervous euphoria, the same belief in a global mission to uplift the uncivilized, the same distrust of alliances (especially with France), and the same presumption of superiority over other breeds and faiths. Indeed, when President Bush affirmed in Crawford, Texas, in August 2002, "Our nation is the greatest force for good in history," he inad-

vertently paraphrased Lord Curzon, who as soon-to-be viceroy to India announced in 1894 that the British Empire was "under providence, the greatest instrument for good the world has ever seen."

Books are sometimes barometers, and both of these qualify. One offers a preview of the audacious agenda of two influential Washington insiders; the other, a more circumspect prognosis of two think-tank denizens seeking a new global strategy to fill the void caused by the collapse of the Soviet empire. The first is the more arresting. David Frum, a former White House aide and proud

ghostparent of the “axis of evil” phrase in the president’s 2002 State of the Union address, and Richard Perle, the longtime scourge of arms-control agreements and recent head of the Department of Defense Policy Board, have put together an action plan to end evil in eight steps, as usefully summarized on the dust jacket:

Support the overthrow of the terrorist mullahs of Iran. End the terrorist regime of Syria. Regard Saudi Arabia and France not as friends but as rivals—maybe enemies. Withdraw support from the United Nations if it does not reform. Tighten immigration at home. Radically reorganize the CIA and FBI. Squeeze China and blockade North Korea to press that member of the axis of evil to abandon its nuclear program. Abandon the illusion that a Palestinian state will contribute in any important way to U.S. security.

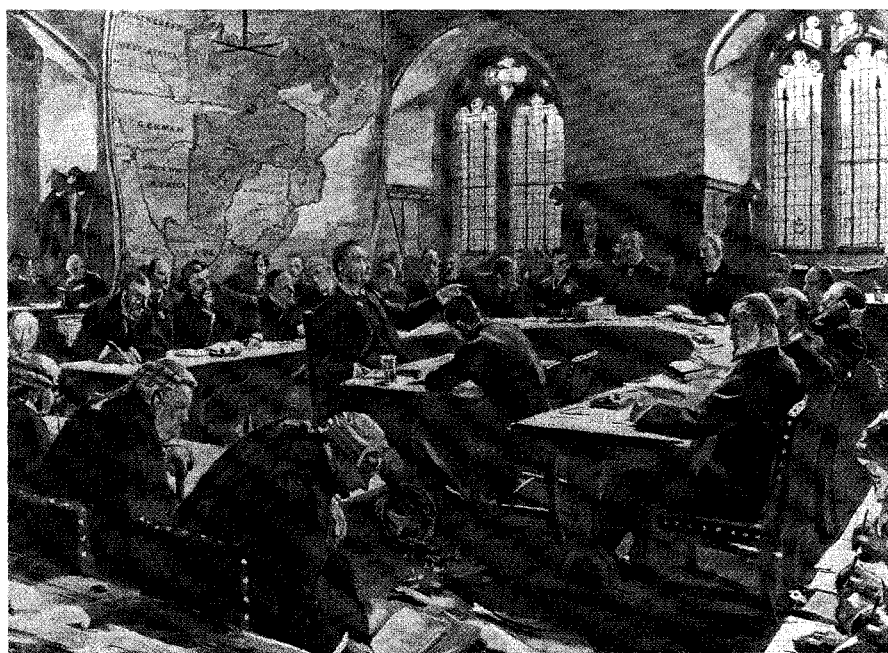
By any measure, that’s a radical agenda: one act of war (blockade), two regime changes (Iran and Syria), withdrawal from the United Nations if it does not yield to ultimatum, and the reversal of decades of policy toward France, Saudi Arabia, China, and Israel-Palestine. Yet given the ongoing turmoil in Iraq, the evident comeback of the Taliban in Afghanistan, steeply rising U.S. deficits, Washington’s belated half-turn for international help in Iraq, and opinion polls that show a plunge globally in trust and respect for the United States, one may sensibly ask: Are Frum and Perle *serious*?

They are. From its title onward, *An End to Evil* is written with a this-won’t-hurt-a-bit *Reader’s Digest* smoothness, one eye-widening sentence following another, in a tone that can be described as wary euphoria. The book’s premises are that America is on top and should so remain indefinitely; that American motives are lofty and disinterested, save for a little backsliding here and there; that Democrats and supporters of alliance diplomacy tend to be naive bunglers; and that masses of people elsewhere yearn for liberation by U.S. armed forces.

The authors, however, never state opposing views fairly, rarely deal with contrary facts, and offer only the most sketchy evidence in support of their

own positions. On page 276, for example, they argue that the appeal of American life is universal and irresistible. Evidence? “We want to be like America,” an unnamed Iraqi excitedly told the brigadier of the 101st Airborne after the liberation of Baghdad. “We want to be like America,” a group of Afghan refugees burred (the authors’ verb) after the overthrow of the Taliban. “We want to be like America,” shouted student protesters in Tehran. These anonymous remarks, plucked from press reports, constitute all the evidence Perle and Frum offer to buttress the proposition that many small coun-

largest in history, encompassing a fourth of the world’s territory and a quarter of its people. British ingenuity had forged the first global economy, bound together by British telegraph cables, steamships, and steel rails. British soldiers had recently triumphed in a succession of colonial wars, and the Royal Navy could outgun any two rivals, its flotilla served by an awesome web of far-flung ports, coaling stations, and the Suez Canal. Granted, Britain had ceased to be the world’s workshop, and its wealth had come to depend on brokers and bankers. Moreover, Britain was not the sole superpower, and its



Imperial Headroom: Cecil Rhodes (center) said he’d annex the stars if he could. Perle and Frum’s kind of guy.

tries turn to the United States for support, “rightly confident that our assistance would not impair their independence and sovereignty.” One can only marvel at the surreal innocence of these soi-disant realists and note that neither seemingly has had firsthand experience of war or occupation, a lacuna all too common among influential promoters of armed intervention. Among them were the officials, columnists, and think-tank senior fellows who before March 2003 announced that conquering Iraq would be a cakewalk and that our GIs would be greeted with flowers.

The same self-flattering chord was sounded by Britain’s New Imperialists in the 1890s. Their empire was then the

rulers kept wary eyes on martial Germans and the nettlesome Yanks, as well as two traditional rivals, France and Russia. Hence the nervousness, the fear of decline, and the fervent call for robust and continuous expansion from imperial colossi like Cecil Rhodes, who declared that he would annex the stars if he could. Pride and purse, glory and sacrifice, the Bible and Maxim guns were among the conflicting ingredients in the new religion, whose most confident political voice was the colonial secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, who reminded doubters that trade followed the flag (he coined the phrase) and noted matter-of-factly, “We are a great governing race, predestined by our defects as well by our virtues, to

spread over the habitable globe.”

Such were the people and beliefs that inspired a rising generation of British soldiers and administrators who shaped today’s Middle East. Their legacy is still felt in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, and Jordan, the Islamic territories falling within the British orbit after the carve-up of the Ottoman Empire in 1918–23. Nobody better articulated the dominant credo regarding Islam than Arthur Balfour, a prince of the Cecil dynasty and nephew of Lord Salisbury, whom he succeeded in 1902 as prime minister. In 1910, he was challenged in Parliament to justify his airs of superiority with regard to people “whom you chose to call Orientals,” the reference being to Britain’s overlordship of Egypt since 1883.

Balfour was frank to a fault. “You may look through the whole history of

breeding terrorists. They rightly denounce Washington’s past pandering to autocratic Saudi Arabia and its corrupt princes. Yet they notably fail to mention that the Reagan administration, in which Perle served, supplied arms and dollars through Pakistan to the most fanatic fundamentalists in the Afghan resistance to Soviet invaders. From these camps emerged Osama bin Laden, with Saudi Arabia matching U.S. aid dollar for dollar in training an international legion of Islamic radicals. It was not the Democrats but the Reagan administration hard-liners who illegally sought to trade arms for hostages, pandering to the very ayatollahs the authors now denounce. In truth, no U.S. party or president is without sin in the Middle East.

So what is to be done? Frum and Perle offer a simple answer: Implant

American advice, and that Iraq will permit U.S. bases and a status-of-forces treaty immunizing military personnel from Iraqi law. These were the very quasi-democratic features devised for Iraq by the British in the 1920s, a system that ended in a bloody 1958 coup that claimed the lives of the British-enthroned king and his pro-British prime minister.

For my part, I am not sure whether a genuinely democratic outcome is possible in Iraq, though only such an outcome would compensate for the slippery and cynical diplomacy that plunged America into this morass. Still, in a Homeric joke on the makers of this war, the White House now grudgingly acknowledges that it must turn to the despised United Nations to give credibility to any post-occupation regime. Call it providence, Greek style.

Although the themes overlap, *America’s Inadvertent Empire* by William E. Odom, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant general, and Robert Dujarric, a well-traveled foreign-policy expert, is a very different book. Unlike Frum and Perle, the authors question whether promoting democracy really serves U.S. interests. Instead they favor encouraging 19th-century liberalism, with its emphasis on personal liberty and property rights. They even claim that the Declaration of Independence says nothing about democracy or majority rule. Really? What about consent of the governed? Did Lincoln misread the meaning of its language on equality? Should Tocqueville have titled his great survey *Property Rights in America* because neither slaves nor women could vote?

Indeed, the book’s very title seems weirdly off the mark. It echoes a famous sentence by the Cambridge don John Seeley in *The Expansion of England* (1883) that the English “seem to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind.” A nice but fanciful line that scarcely does justice to the bold soldiers and merchant adventurers who evicted the Moguls from India and the French from North America, or to the proconsuls and entrepreneurs who painted Africa red. In America, “inadvertent” cannot explain Manifest Destiny, the Monroe Doctrine, the Mexican War, or the Spanish-

One can only marvel at the surreal innocence of these soi-disant realists and note that neither seemingly has had firsthand experience of war or occupation.

Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self-government,” he said. “All their great centuries—and they have been very great—have been passed under despotisms, under absolute government.” With British tutelage, he maintained, Egypt was getting the best government it had ever had, a fact of benefit not merely to Egyptians but to all the West. What Balfour’s critique failed to mention was the fact that Britain systematically quelled democratic stirrings from Egypt to Iran, that it preferred dealing with bribable sheiks and khedives, and that it routinely favored ethnic and religious minorities, sowing future discord in the name of good government.

Change good government to self-government and his words anticipate the views of Perle and Frum. In their eyes, Muslim leaders are too often extremists who encourage suicide bombers, treat women as serfs, and plot nuclear blackmail. From Pakistan and Syria to Saudi Arabia, the authors remind us, seminaries and mosques have been

democracy, by force if necessary. In their words: “We do not show our respect for human differences by shrugging indifferently [as if that were the alternative] when people somehow different from ourselves are brutalized in body and spirit To say that we are engaged in ‘imposing American values’ when we liberate people is to imply that there are peoples on this earth who value their own subjugation.”

But which American values? In the recent past, Washington has overtly or covertly promoted the overthrow of democratic or constitutional leaders in Iran, Guatemala, South Vietnam, Cambodia, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Grenada, and Greece. Washington has also backed or indulged tyrannies in Indonesia, Chile, the Philippines, the Congo, Pakistan, and, not least, Iraq, during its war with Iran. Moreover, Frum and Perle’s concept of a democratic Iraq seemingly envisions a secular constitution, fitted with brakes on majority rule so that the Shiite mullahs won’t take over; it assumes Iraqi foreign policy will be subject to

American War, all willed acts of dominion. Together these battles and beliefs established a hemisphere-wide American imperium, a prelude to the Cold War Empire, with its global network of bases and alliances.

Now, following the Soviet collapse, people everywhere talk of an American Empire, and understandably. The most useful chapters of Dujarric and Odom's book document the awesome scale of America's predominance—military, economic, scientific, educational, and cultural. They rightly caution that acts of folly could bring the structure crashing down, they hedge on the merits of the Iraq War, and they qualifiedly approve unilateral military intervention only when multilateral action is not possible. None of these conclusions is provocative or original; they are the stuff of task-force reports. The authors' greatest enthusiasm is reserved for the emergence of a globalized Liberal Empire.

It says something, moreover, about our historical amnesia that a book titled *America's Inadvertent Empire* fails to list in its bibliography a dozen prescient works on the same theme written in the 1950s and '60s. One passage, from the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Structure of Nations and Empires* (1968), seems especially relevant to our present pickle: "We are not a sanctified nation and we must not assume that all our actions are dictated by considerations of disinterested justice. If we fall into this error, the natural resentments ... on the part of the weaker nations will be compounded with resentments against our pretensions of superior virtue. These resentments are indeed a part of the animus of anti-Americanism throughout the world."

Indeed. ■

KARL E. MEYER is the editor of *World Policy Journal* and the author, most recently, of *The Dust of Empire*.

BOOKS

Soft News, Hard Cash

BACKSTORY: INSIDE THE BUSINESS OF NEWS
BY KEN AULETTA • PENGUIN • 296 PAGES • \$24.95

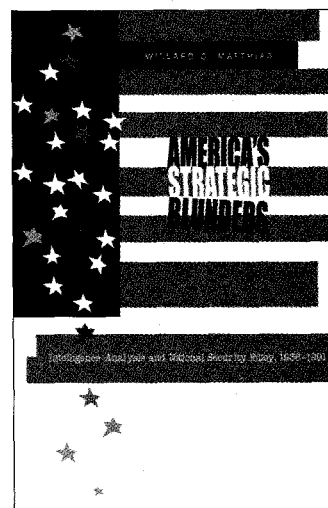
ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO SELL: HOW THE MARKET TRANSFORMS INFORMATION INTO NEWS BY JAMES T. HAMILTON • PRINCETON UNIVERSITY PRESS • 342 PAGES • \$35.00

BY TODD GITLIN

THERE'S A LOT OF MUTTERING NOWADAYS about the future of a minor, almost wholly owned subsidiary of the entertainment conglomerates that nevertheless fascinates and irritates most readers of this magazine: the news business. With most American newspapers stuck with slowly ebbing circulations during most recent years, and television news stagnant or worse in quality while inflating in quantity, there are plenty of reasons to mutter. Indeed, no one grumbles more than journalists themselves about the dumbing down of the news or what the French charmingly call "cretinization"—catch-all terms for the consequences of the infotainment boom and

the foreign-news bust (despite the post-September 11 boomlet); the rise of 24-7 cable, the fall of the networks; the rise of the bean counters, the fall of the journalists. A Martian descending to inspect the civilization of Earth's Sole Remaining Superpower would surely wring all his, her, or its hands at the spectacle of what passes for public information in the age of the proliferating Dean Scream, the FOX Knocks, and the Drudge Sludge. Two new books illuminate the process, and neither brings much good news.

Ken Auletta is the best reporter presently scouting out America's media backstage. Now at *The New Yorker*, where all but two of the pieces in



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Backstory first saw the light of day, Auletta has for more than a decade prowled the boardrooms and corner offices of the media string-pullers. When he was starting out on the media beat, he was too often distracted by buzz and dazzled by wardrobe and menus. Perhaps he was overly impressed by the rich and famous then, or overly influenced by the Tom-Wolfe-in-chic-clothing style of fashion reportage doubling as journalism. A decade of watching the Rupert Murdochs and Gerald Levins do their things, though, has concentrated his mind on mogul thinking, and Auletta's eye has never been keener or more selective than in his new book.

On the education of *The New York Times'* Arthur Ochs Sulzberger and the amateur of the meteorically flamed out Howell Raines; on the synergies and journalistic flatness of Chicago's suc-

cessful Tribune Company; on the *Los Angeles Times'* demolition of the famous wall that is supposed to separate business and editorial functions; on FOX News' formula for profitability (on which subject, I suppose I should disclose, I am briefly one of Auletta's talking heads); on the hype that inflated the value of an Internet bubble called Inside.com before it crashed and popped; and, perhaps most consequentially, on the "fee speech" that enriched many of TV news' biggest names on the strength of their celebrity appearances (aka "lectures") at corporate conventions, Auletta is the go-to guy for detail and atmosphere, a sort of pictorialization of corporate states of mind.

Although he scores some little reportorial coups along the way, Auletta is more drawn to mind-sets than gotcha moments. This is a net plus, though sometimes this reader wishes for more attention to the content of the journalism itself. When, in 1997, the *Chicago Tribune's* managing editor orders up "a story on the actual military and terrorist threat posed by Saddam Hussein," inquiring minds want to know how that reporting holds up in the light of later developments. When, in 1993, a young Arthur Sulzberger Jr. tells Auletta that he doesn't read any magazine regularly and no newspaper but the *Times* itself, what does that mean? How might such insularity be reflected—or not—in the paper itself?

The patient reader in search of a more thorough explanation of what is happening to news should turn to Duke University's public-policy professor and economist James T. Hamilton, who combines number-crunching thoroughness with economic acumen to develop a rather convincing model of why newspaper publishers and TV news managers do what they do. As in his earlier book *Channeling Violence*, on the economic logic of violent TV, markets rule. It's the demographics, stupid.

news was up and running, the road to Murdoch, as well as to the Sulzbergers, was already under construction. If you want to know why newspapers abandoned partisanship during the 19th century, why local TV stations owned by corporate groups run less hard news than independents, or why the editorial positions of newspapers don't affect the tone of political coverage, Hamilton can explain it to you: Follow the markets.

Thus, in television, news directors take for granted that the regular audience for news is disproportionately over 50. The value-added eyeballs they hunt for, the better to impress advertisers, consist primarily of women 18 to 49. These irregular viewers have softer interests: health and celebrity stories and the like. They also tilt relatively liberal, which accounts for such "news bias" as exists. (At least the viewers who think there is a bias think it's a liberal one—a dubious conclusion, as Eric Alterman has recently demonstrated.) Advertising-rate figures confirm that sponsors are willing to spend much more to address these viewers than they are to attract the equivalent number of elders. Television news therefore bends over backward to soften the news at the margins. Newspapers are different, however, because they can attract multiple audiences simultaneously—people can jump around newspapers sampling their favorite subjects (you can turn to sports while skipping the front page) without having to sit through the whole sequence. So rational profit-seeking newspapers will accommodate more hard news than TV.

Hamilton is a demon researcher who excavates much fascinating data but sometimes (see liberal bias, above) leaves too much skepticism at home. He deploys number-crunching software and various ingenious measures of what local markets will bear to explain why, say, viewers like crime news that exaggerates how much crime there is. He explains the economic logic that has raised an anchor's salary to the equivalent of 28 ads per year for Walter Cronkite and John Chancellor in 1976 to 149 ads for Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw in 1999, even as the share of TV viewers watching the evening news has declined dramatically over the

A Martian visiting Earth would wring his, her, or its hands at what passes for public information in the age of the Dean Scream, FOX Knocks, and Drudge Sludge.

cessful Tribune Company; on the *Los Angeles Times'* demolition of the famous wall that is supposed to separate business and editorial functions; on FOX News' formula for profitability (on which subject, I suppose I should disclose, I am briefly one of Auletta's talking heads); on the hype that inflated the value of an Internet bubble called Inside.com before it crashed and popped; and, perhaps most consequentially, on the "fee speech" that enriched many of TV news' biggest names on the strength of their celebrity appearances (aka "lectures") at corporate conventions, Auletta is the go-to guy for detail and atmosphere, a sort of pictorialization of corporate states of mind.

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To compress an intricate argument festooned with dozens of tables, Hamilton applies to news decisions what he calls the "5 Ws" model: What determines which information in the world is going to become news depends on the market's answer to five questions. "Who cares about a particular piece of information?" Hamilton asks. "What are they willing to pay to find it, or what are others willing to pay to reach them? Where can media outlets or advertisers reach these people? When is it profitable to provide the information? Why is this profitable?" The answers to these questions, Hamilton claims, "dictate the content of the news."

They do so historically, they do so today, and they anticipate the future. Not that government decisions are unimportant—in fact, a great deal about the shape of the American market for news can be traced to an early governmental decision: to subsidize newspaper and magazine circulation via the post office's reduced rates. But once the essential infrastructure of

same period. (It's branding, branding, branding. The more competition, the greater the value of product differentiation.) Hamilton considers not only newspapers, television, and radio but also the Internet, concluding (on the basis of data from 2000, too soon for blogs or Howard Dean to have had their chance to move the numbers) that the Net does indeed bring a dispersed population into the express game, but observes that "people are much more likely to search the Net for information about entertainment figures than political issues."

Sometimes Hamilton is naive, overlooking some pregnant questions. He notes, for example, that "once the Fairness Doctrine was removed, radio stations were much more willing to offer programming that discussed public affairs"—without pointing out that the resulting "discussion" leaned way right. Sometimes his methodology leads him to odd conclusions—which is no intellectual sin at all, but he should still reckon with counterarguments. For example, his software for measuring various qualities of the vocabulary used by pundits registers the conclusion that "conservatives are more likely [than liberals] to use phrases that reflect ambivalence/uncertainty"—precisely the opposite of the conclusion reached by Jeffrey Scheuer in *The Sound Bite Society*. This needs a second look, but Hamilton doesn't supply it.

Still, Hamilton deserves credit for boldly endorsing the counterintuitive if that is where his data lead him. For example, "[I]ncreased concentration can in some markets lead to more diversity since sellers in a concentrated market may offer products aimed at attracting additional customers to the market rather than aimed at stealing customers from already offered varieties." Again, though, one wishes him to go further. Which markets? Under what conditions? If concentration might indeed produce some variations in radio music playlists, why doesn't it produce diversity in the news? For that matter, what would happen if Hamilton applied his model to news systems in other countries? Doctoral students, start your engines.

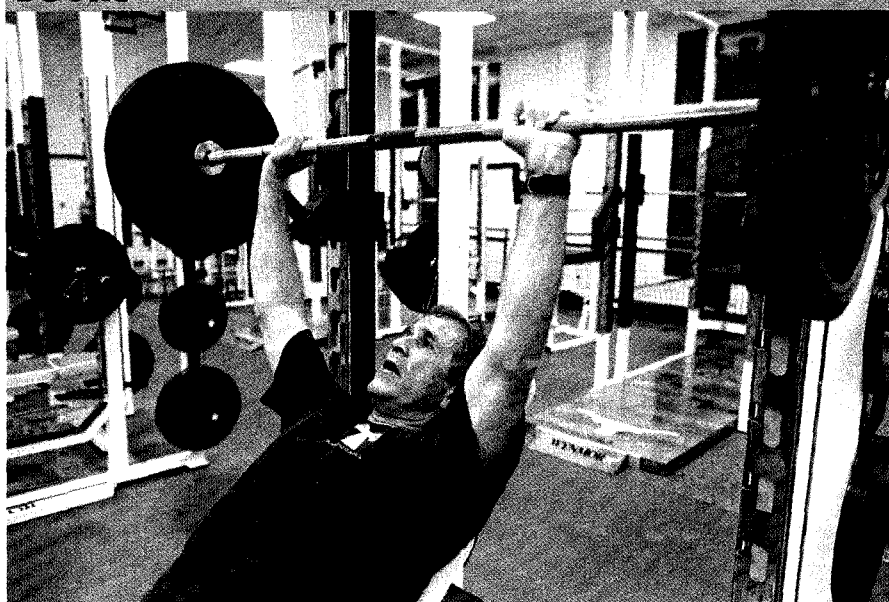
Hamilton is aware that economic calculation, conscious or not, can't explain everything, let alone serve democratic values. He notes that benefits of various decisions and policies are harder to assess than costs. He doesn't note, however, that ostensibly rational corporate chiefs make huge assumptions they don't always trouble to justify. It's unclear, for example, that advertisers are rational when they invest far more in attracting the younger and more female than the older and more male. Is it *really* true, or only mythological, that younger viewers

flex their product tastes and their consumer preferences but turn to stone once they cross the fossilizing half-century line?

In any event, this reader has no doubt that most of the people who run the news business think the way Hamilton infers they think. Nor will Auletta's readers. And that's the bottom line. ■

TODD GITLIN is a professor of journalism and sociology at Columbia University and the author of, most recently, *Media Unlimited* and *Letters to a Young Activist*.

BOOKS



Weight a Minute: Biceps may make the man, but do they make the man a good leader?

The Muscle State

CLOSING THE LEADERSHIP GAP: WHY WOMEN CAN AND MUST HELP RUN THE WORLD BY MARIE C. WILSON • VIKING PRESS • 256 PAGES • \$24.95

BY ANN CRITTENDEN

AMERICANS ARE CURRENTLY LIVING under the most stereotypically male leadership we have seen in decades, if not longer. The president is a parody of the swaggering, steely-eyed gunfighter; the vice president is the tightlipped CEO who kills small birds for fun; the attorney general is the moralizing preacher, lecturing his flock on what's good for them—or else.

The public, living in fear of the ter-

rorist threat, has accepted this return to Big Daddy government. And the Democrats, living in fear themselves, have responded by beefing up their own testosterone levels. That has been part of the appeal of John Kerry, an authentic war hero who not only radiates the manly qualities associated with "presidentialness" but also dresses up in leather and rides a Harley, plays hockey with professionals, and owns a gun.

Jim Jordan, Kerry's former campaign manager, was quoted recently as saying that Kerry is "what voters were looking for in this cycle. ... He's big, he's masculine, he's a serious man for a serious time." Echoing Jordan's assessment in a column headlined "The Politics of Manliness," conservative pundit George Will opined that "Democrats who are serious about the candidate's electability understand that seriousness requires a retreat from the feminization of politics." Feminized politics, Will explained, is overly obsessed with children. In short, we seem to have bipartisan agreement that in a time of crisis, only real men need apply for the big job.

This would not appear to be the most propitious time, then, to issue a call for female leadership. But that is exactly what longtime feminist Marie Wilson is doing in her new book. Wilson is president of the Ms. Foundation and the White House Project, a nonpartisan effort to get more women into leadership roles. But she is best known as the woman who in 1993 launched the Take Our Daughters to Work Day, a wildly successful idea that has changed how many parents view girls' possibilities.

The event became the first "girl" thing that boys ever wanted to do, Wilson proudly relates, for she was immediately confronted with demands that boys be included. But when she tried to develop a male equivalent, like a Take Our Sons Home Day or a program offering boys a glimpse of "women's work" in day-care centers, social services, and the like, the male reaction was eye opening. She reports that men told her that would *punish* their sons, and a sons' day never got off the ground.

Wilson's efforts to promote the acceptance of women in serious positions of leadership have been equally frustrating. When the White House Project screened TV spots before a diverse audience to see which ads were the most effective, the audience showed a favorable response to the male politicians the second their faces appeared. The female politicians stayed even or were dialed *down* before they said a word. And although most people surveyed in polls say they would be comfortable with a woman in the presidency or in other leadership positions, they say that most *other* people

would put "more stock" in a man. These other people would put more trust in a man's ability to conduct foreign policy, handle law and order, and manage the economy, while women would rank higher in trustworthiness and honesty.

So what does this tell us, Wilson asks—that character matters less in a leader than a degree in international relations? Geez, Louise!

Worse, females are as likely as males to assume that men are our natural leaders. Wilson understands that the barriers to female leadership are within as well as without, and she challenges women's self-defeating assumptions that men have, or appear to have, or should



have, more ability, ambition, authority, and authenticity. This is more than we can say of the media, which reinforce this gender bias. In a study called "Who's Talking," Wilson's group analyzed guest appearances on the major public-affairs talk shows during the year 2000 and the first six months of 2001. Male "talking heads" outnumbered females by 9 to 1. In the month after September 11, men outnumbered women by 13 to 1. Women chaired all the Senate's three principal subcommittees on terrorism, yet *none* was seen or heard on a talk show in the weeks after 9-11. The ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, Nancy Pelosi, was not once invited to share her views. A similar review for several weeks in 2003 showed little change. *Meet the Press* had no woman on nine different Sundays. Maybe they were all

home fixing Sunday dinner.

Wilson is a "difference feminist" who firmly believes that if women had more power, they would do things differently. This may not be true, but as Bella Abzug once said, there's only one way to find out: Let's try it. There is certainly ample evidence linking the percentage of women in a legislative body and the passage of laws benefiting women and children. And it is even more obvious that when women have little or no political power, things are very, very bad for most people. Alabama, for example, ranks dead last in the nation in the number of female elected officials. And—surprise, surprise—the state is near the bottom in most measures of quality of life, including income, education, women and children's health—just like all those other underdeveloped places with all-male leadership.

Closing the Leadership Gap is more of a description and prescription than an analysis. This slender book doesn't seriously explore the reasons for the deep-rooted preference for male leadership, an effort that is necessary if we are to seriously challenge it. Nor does it offer a powerful new case for the need for female leadership, *especially* in a time of crisis. Why, for example, are humans the only mammalian species in which the female is not free to defend her offspring as she thinks best? There may be good reasons to believe that women, and mothers in particular, would be the fiercest, most capable defenders of homeland security, and the most likely to keep us out of dangerous imperial overreach.

The book could also make more of the truth that serious leadership has little or nothing to do with atavistic notions of masculinity. Great, transformational leaders can be short (Napoleon), frequently depressed (Lincoln), or even crippled (Roosevelt). They can be small, skinny people in funny clothes (Gandhi and Ho Chi Minh). They can even be women (Queen Elizabeth and Margaret Thatcher). Gandhi perhaps put it best: "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will." ■

ANN CRITTENDEN is the author of *The Price of Motherhood*.

BOOKS

One-Sided World

IN DEFENSE OF GLOBALIZATION BY JAGDISH BHAGWATI • OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS • 296 PAGES • \$28.00

BY MARK LEVINSON

WHEN N. GREGORY MANKIW, CHAIRMAN of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, declared in February that the outsourcing of jobs to foreign countries was a good thing, he was only saying what advocates of free trade have always believed. But his statement unnerved the leaders of both political parties because of its starkness and timing. While the economy has picked up in the past year, employment has been slow to respond. Private payrolls are running about 8 million workers below the path of the average recovery, and many people are wondering whether free-trade policies are working for them.

No one has crusaded more zealously on behalf of free trade than Jagdish Bhagwati, professor of economics at Columbia University. *In Defense of Globalization* sums up his case, and for free-trade advocates under siege, it arrives not a minute too soon. The book is certainly engaging. While skewering anti-globalization organizations and arguing that globalization reduces poverty, narrows inequality, supports democracy, enriches culture, helps the environment, and is good for workers both north and south, Bhagwati quotes, among others, Shakespeare, Balzac, Auden, Achebe, Rilke, Dr. Johnson and, to an annoying degree, himself. But for all its charm, the book is a disappointment.

If you are looking for reassurance that, whatever problems bedevil the world, globalization is part of the solution, read Bhagwati. If you are looking for serious engagement with critics who are not against globalization but oppose the particular version of it favored by the world's financial elites, you will be disappointed. Bhagwati does not rebut their arguments, nor does he address critical facts or research findings that do not support his own case. He claims

to offer "a total war" on behalf of globalization, and in that war there is little place for nuance or complication. His zeal to put an unrelenting happy face on globalization makes for an unpersuasive book.

Bhagwati's claim that free trade leads to faster growth, which in turn reduces poverty and inequality, is at the heart of his argument. It is also wrong. Bhagwati never confronts the awkward record of the globalization era, which has been characterized by a drastic slowdown in economic growth. A study by the Center for Economic Policy and Research compared the rate of growth in real gross domestic product from 1960 to 1980 with the rate from 1980 to 2000 for 116 countries. Dividing the countries into quintiles according to per-capita income, the study found that the growth rate fell for every group from the earlier to the later period. Among the poorest countries, the 1980–2000 growth rates turned negative.

As a result of globalization, trading volumes in developing countries have grown faster than the world average since the 1980s. Developing countries now account for almost a third of world merchandise trade. Manufactures account for 70 percent of developing-country exports after hovering at around 20 percent in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Yet the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development notes that this massive increase in the volume of exports has not added significantly to developing countries' income. And a report by the Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean, titled "Globalization and Development," concludes, "Historically, the periods of greatest export expansion have tended to coincide with lackluster economic growth, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean."

Why haven't developing countries benefited from increased openness to trade? Bhagwati doesn't appreciate that manufacturing faces the sort of chronic overcapacity problems that agriculture has endured for most of the last century. Because many countries are now similarly positioned in the international economy—producing apparel, toys, and electronics for export—they must compete feverishly for investment by multinational producers. The result is an unending cycle of wage depression, decreasing benefits, and a dearth of investment in education. In addition, workers lack the most basic rights (especially the right to organize) and are therefore unable to form unions and bargain for their fair share of productivity increases.

The contradictions of export-led growth stand to become sharper with China's membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO). China's huge supplies of labor at rock-bottom wages will last for decades. It is not clear that any developing country can now enter the system with production costs below those of China, making it impossible for newcomers to climb the hierarchy of export-led growth.

To demonstrate the connection between globalization and growth, Bhagwati cites a World Bank study that divides countries into two groups—"globalizers" and "non-globalizers"—and then attempts to show that the first group did much better than the second.

The economist Dani Rodrik has demonstrated that the way the World Bank measures whether or not a country is "globalized" is deeply flawed. First, it takes the trade share of GDP as a measure of globalization. But trade share is an outcome, not a policy variable. It tends to increase with growth. So all the World Bank has shown is that faster-growing countries tend to increase the proportion of their economy devoted to trade. Second, the World Bank's favorite "globalizers" include China, India, and Vietnam, countries that are among the most protected domestic markets in the world. And while they have liberalized trade in recent years, their growth spurts began about a decade earlier. These countries are not examples of free trade leading to growth, yet the World Bank

cites them as evidence on behalf of free-trade policies. Bhagwati ignores this criticism of the evidence he relies on.

According to Bhagwati, the preoccupation with measures of global inequality is "ludicrous." But because others play at this "lunacy," he cites studies arguing that global inequality declined during the last two decades and concludes, "[G]lobalization cannot be *plausibly* argued to have increased poverty ... or to have widened world inequality" (my emphasis). Bhagwati doesn't take seriously studies showing an increase in global poverty and inequality by the World Bank's Branko Milanovic, James Galbraith, and two of the author's Columbia University colleagues, Tom Pogge and Sanjay Reddy. Pogge and Reddy make a persuasive case that global poverty is underestimated and that once corrections are made for the problems in the World Bank's methodology, the number of persons living in absolute poverty might increase by 30 percent to 40 percent.

Bhagwati's discussion of attempts to link trade and labor rights is particularly confused. First, he mischaracterizes the issue by referring to the protectionist motivation behind the attempt to impose "labor standards." There is an important distinction between labor rights and labor standards. Labor rights are basic human rights that all countries have pledged to support regardless of their level of development. Labor standards, on the other hand, refer to such outcomes as wage levels or specific health and safety rules. The global labor movement is attempting to make labor rights part of the ground rules of the global economy.

Finally, as Ha-Joon Chang, assistant director of development studies at Cambridge University, explains in *Kicking Away the Ladder*, the ideology of free trade fits awkwardly into the history of economic development. During their early development, today's developed countries did not practice free trade. They promoted their national industries through tariffs, subsidies, import quotas, local-content requirements, and patent infringements—all of which are currently prohibited under the WTO.

So Bhagwati is faced with the Chang paradox: Developing countries grew

much faster when they used "bad" policies during the 1960s and 1970s, and the countries that are doing the best today tend to be still using the same policies. These policies were also the ones that most developed countries originally followed. The solution to this paradox is that the supposedly good policies—free trade—are not so good. Robert Lawrence, a staunch free trader and a member of Bill Clinton's Council of Economic

Advisers, captured the feelings of many when he told *BusinessWeek*, "I still have faith that globalization will make us better off, but it's no more than faith."

In Defense of Globalization may bolster that faith. But that is all it will do. ■

MARK LEVINSON is the chief economist at the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and serves on Dissent magazine's editorial board.

BOOKS

Incurious George

THE PRICE OF LOYALTY: GEORGE W. BUSH, THE WHITE HOUSE, AND THE EDUCATION OF PAUL O'NEILL BY RON SUSKIND • SIMON & SCHUSTER • 348 PAGES • \$26.00

BY HAROLD MEYERSON

GEORGE W. BUSH HAS HAD A COLD winter, and it's not chiefly the Democrats' doing. The weapons of mass destruction in Iraq—and with them the *raison d'être* for Bush's war—proved to be fictitious. Worse yet, it began to dawn on the American people that their president had nothing new to offer them to fix the economy.

The emperor-has-no-clothes moment for this administration came, I'd argue, this January during Bush's State of the Union address, which revealed to all the world a president plainly disconnected from the concerns of his people and flat out of ideas to address the nation's problems. By the evidence of all polling, the policies for which he took credit—chiefly, a Medicare "reform" that helped drug companies and tax cuts for the rich—don't resonate with the public. Nor did he trot out any proposals to allay the public's anxieties about lagging job creation, diminishing health coverage, or rising college-tuition costs. Indeed, the most specific problem the president raised was that of steroids in sports—a detour so utterly irrelevant to most Americans' concerns that many surely wondered if this Bush, for all his down-home manner, wasn't as out of touch with their lives as his father had been.

But then, this administration has really had only two ideas since its incep-

tion: cutting taxes on the wealthy and deposing Saddam Hussein. And for those who wonder how an administration could be so disconnected from other concerns and perspectives, we now have this account of the inner workings of Bushland from Paul O'Neill, secretary of the treasury during the administration's first two years until his adherence to two dangerous doctrines—empiricism and traditional Republicanism—did him in.

The Price of Loyalty is the second memoir from disgruntled former Bush officials that former *Wall Street Journal* reporter Ron Suskind has shaped into a finished narrative. His first disillusioned traveler was John DiIulio, who ran Bush's office on faith-based initiatives until he realized that he was the only inhabitant of the West Wing who cared about domestic policy as distinct from politics. (DiIulio memorably characterized Karl Rove and his ilk as "Mayberry Machiavellis.")

Now comes O'Neill, or, rather, O'Neill and Christie Todd Whitman, Bush's former Environmental Protection Agency administrator, who also appears in this volume to tell her own horror stories of science trumped by ideology. For Republican moderates who couldn't cotton to the administration's narrow zealotries, a Suskind-authored sympathetic account of their travails has become the

preferred form of self-justification and, apparently, therapy.

At the center of O'Neill's story are a pair of sphinxes: Bush and O'Neill's old friend Dick Cheney, who recruited him for the Treasury job in the first place. The truly riveting scenes in the book—and Suskind is an accomplished storyteller—are O'Neill's regular meetings with Bush and his irregular meetings with Cheney. In his weekly briefings with the president, O'Neill is unnerved by Bush's almost aggressive lack of curiosity. The president rarely asks him anything, never seems to react, just looks at him "with the flat, inexpressive stare to which O'Neill had become accustomed." In time, O'Neill becomes convinced that Bush doesn't read briefing papers and doesn't want to entertain proposals that deviate from his goals of cutting taxes or overthrowing Hussein.

O'Neill spent much of his tenure trying to diminish and forestall the tax cuts, fruitlessly running a stream of dismal economic numbers by a couldn't-care-less president. A longtime deficit hawk, O'Neill linked up with his buddy Alan Greenspan to try to condition the cuts on the state of government finances, but such hoary fiscal prudence was as naught next to Bush and Cheney's sense of entitlement. "We won the midterms," Cheney told O'Neill after the 2002 election, to justify his (or the president's; it's not clear whose) decision to cut taxes on dividends. "This is our due." It's seldom that you hear policy justified solely on the basis that the spoils go to the victor, but Cheney's declaration is remarkable also because it's almost his only clear declaratory statement in the book. As with Bush, Cheney's normal mode was to sit in silence, though as O'Neill recounts it, Bush was spacing while Cheney was plotting.

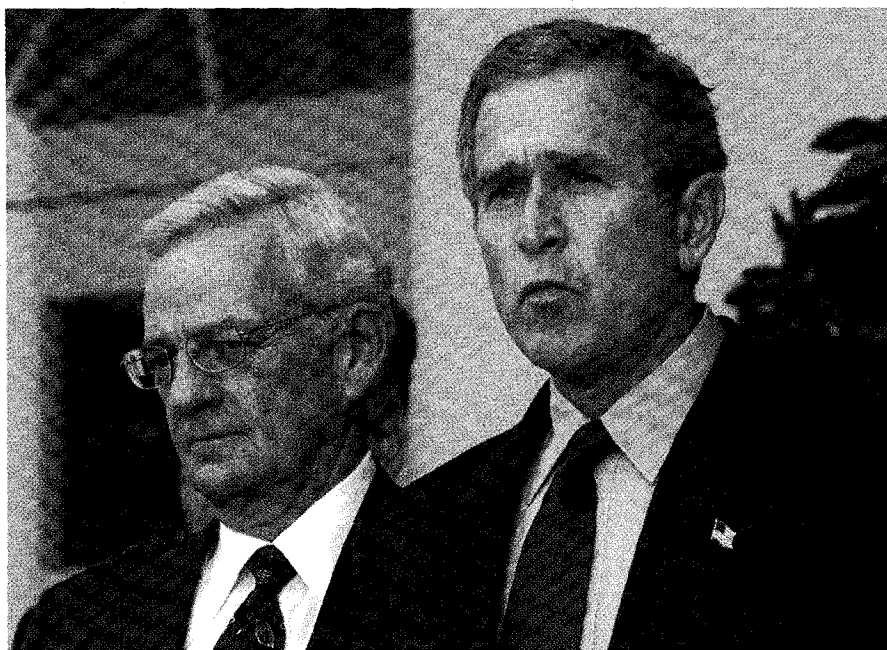
The most detailed revelations in O'Neill's account are those concerning Iraq. As a member of the National Security Council, the treasury secretary routinely attended council meetings and recounts that as early as the first such gathering, on January 30, 2001, just 10 days after Bush's inauguration, the central topic was how to topple Hussein. CIA Director George Tenet produced a photo of an Iraqi factory that might be producing chemical or biological

weapons, though he could adduce no more than circumstantial evidence that this was the case. (Cheney, O'Neill recalls in a nice touch, waved everyone in the room to come closer and see the nefarious facility for themselves.)

While O'Neill depicts Bush and Cheney as sinister in their silence, his Greenspan comes across as unusually gregarious and clear. O'Neill headed up an administration task force to develop corporate governance reforms in the wake of the Enron, Tyco, and WorldCom disasters. He and Greenspan were allies in proposing stricter CEO accountability for company reports. At

Exchange Commission] overreach," he said. Until three weeks previous, the SEC had been headed by Harvey Pitt, the most laissez-faire chairman that the commission had ever seen, but Bush's empathy for nervous CEOs apparently knew no bounds.

O'Neill had been a notable CEO himself, presiding over Alcoa, and if this book is any evidence, he has more than his share of CEO arrogance, self-satisfaction, and self-delusion to show for it. But he also comes across as an archetype of an earlier age and an earlier Republicanism. He has an almost loony nostalgia for the Nixon administration,



Undynamic Duo: Former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill with President Bush, October 2001.

one task-force meeting, encountering resistance from administration economists Lawrence Lindsey and Glenn Hubbard, Greenspan exploded at the manipulation of earnings statements to boost stock prices. "There's too much gaming of the system until it is broke!" he cried. "Capitalism is not working!"

In the end, CEOs successfully pressured the White House to water down O'Neill's proposals for greater CEO accountability. But, then, the Bush presidency is government by and for CEOs. In one 2002 meeting of the administration's leading economic players, an uncharacteristically unscripted Bush ventured his own analysis of business' reluctance to invest: "The economic uncertainty is because of [Securities and

in which he worked, extolling the seriousness with which Richard Nixon took matters of policy and contrasting that with the reign of the political types—Rove most especially—in the current White House. (The names "Haldeman" and "Ehrlichman" appear nowhere in his Nixon reveries.)

More seriously, O'Neill never believed the supply-side creeds that tax cuts drove investment and that deficits didn't matter. He knew CEOs too well to trust them implicitly. He didn't see how overthrowing Hussein would solve the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum. He failed to grasp the appeal of preemptive war. He was a conservative in a radical administration. No wonder he got the sack. ■

W.'s Second Term

BY ROBERT B. REICH

Musings about a second Bush term typically assume another four years of the same right-wing policies we've had to date. But it'd likely be far worse. So far, the Bush administration has had to govern with the expectation of facing American voters

again in 2004. But suppose George W. Bush wins a second term. The constraint of a re-election contest will be gone. Knowing that voters can no longer turn them out, and that this will be their last shot at remaking America, the radical conservatives will be unleashed.

A friend who specializes in foreign policy and hobnobs with subcabinet officials in the Defense and State departments told me that the only thing that's stopped the Bushies from storming into Iran and North Korea is the upcoming election. If Bush is re-elected, "[Dick] Cheney and [Donald] Rumsfeld are out of the box," he said. "They'll take Bush's re-election as a mandate to wage the 'war on terror' everywhere and anywhere."

The second term's defense team will be even harder line than the current one. Colin Powell will go. Condoleezza Rice will take over at the State Department. Rumsfeld will consolidate power as the president's national-security adviser. Paul Wolfowitz will run the Defense Department.

Domestic policy will swing further right. A re-election would strengthen the White House's hand on issues that even many congressional Republicans have a hard time accepting, such as the assault on civil liberties. Bush will seek to push "Patriot II" through Congress, giving the Justice Department and the FBI powers to inspect mail, eavesdrop on phone conversations and e-mail, and examine personal medical records, insurance claims, and bank accounts.

Right-wing evangelicals will solidify their control over the departments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services—curtailing abortions, putting federal funds into the hands of private religious groups, pushing prayer in the public schools, and promoting creationism.

Economic policy, meanwhile, will be tilted even more brazenly toward the rich. Republican strategist Grover Norquist smugly predicts larger tax benefits for high earners in a second Bush administration. The goal will be to eliminate all taxes on capital gains, dividends, and other forms of unearned income and move toward a "flat tax." The plan will be for deficits to continue to balloon until Wall

Street demands large spending cuts as a condition for holding down long-term interest rates. Homeowners, facing potential losses on their major nest eggs as mortgage rates move upward, might be persuaded to join the chorus.

In consequence, Bush will slash all domestic spending outside of defense. He will also argue that Social Security cannot be maintained in its present form, and will push for legislation to transform it into private accounts. Meanwhile, the few shards of regulation still protecting the environment and the safety of American workers will be eliminated.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor will surely step down from the Supreme Court, possibly joined by at least one other jurist, opening the way for the White House to nominate a series of right-wing justices, a list that could easily include Charles Pickering Sr. and William Pryor Jr. After Chief Justice William Rehnquist resigns, Bush may well nominate Antonin Scalia for the top slot—opening the way for Scalia and Clarence Thomas to dominate the Court. Such a court will curtail abortion rights, whittle down the Fourth and Fifth amendments, end all af-

firmative action, and eliminate much of what's left of the barrier between church and state.

Karl Rove and Tom DeLay, meanwhile, will have four more years to fulfill their goal of transforming American democracy into a one-party state. Congressional redistricting across the nation will make Texas' recent antics seem a model of democratic deliberation. Automated voting machines will be easily rigged, with no paper trails to document abuses. Changes in campaign-finance laws will permit larger "hard money" donations by corporate executives and federal contractors who have benefited by Republican policies.

Finally, the Federal Communications Commission will allow three or four giant media empires—all tightly connected to the Republican Party—to consolidate their ownership over all television and radio broadcasting.

Nothing is more dangerous to a republic than fanatics unconstrained by democratic politics. Yet in a second term of this administration, that's exactly what we'll have. ■

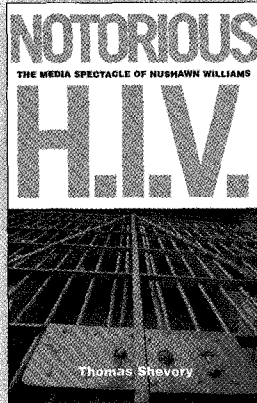
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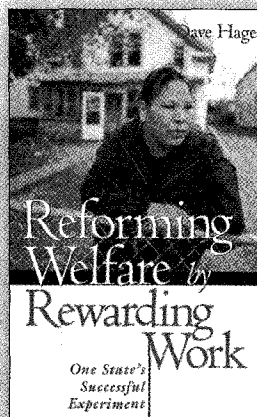
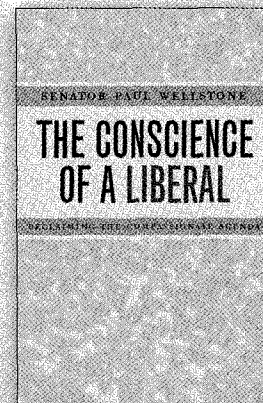
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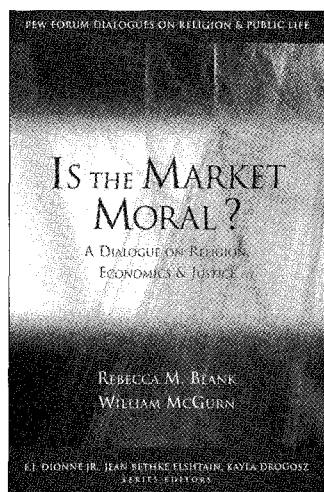
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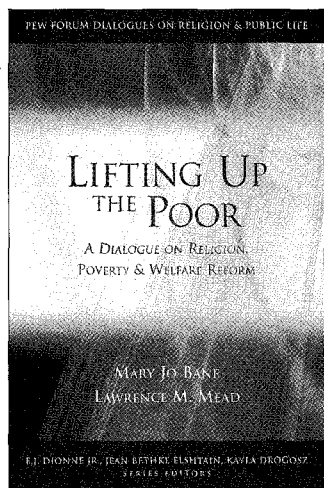
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